

WE'RE ALL JUST A BUNCH OF CRAZY LADIES HAVING FUN: TRAVEL  
MOTIVATIONS OF SERIOUS QUILTERS

A Thesis

by

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Submitted to the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies of  
Texas A&M University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

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May 2017

Major Subject: Recreation, Park, and Tourism Sciences

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## ABSTRACT

Quilting is a serious leisure activity that can bring quilters to travel long distances for their crafting pleasure. Serious quilters are a part of this social world that has not been studied at great length as of late. These quilters are ones who take bus tours, participate in shop hops, travel to quilting festivals, and even sail and quilt on quilting cruises. However, this phenomenon has not been studied from a tourism aspect. Serious quilters from all over the world are traveling to festivals, shops, and other destinations to quilt, and the motivations behind why they do this have not been researched.

This study accrued data through phone and Skype interviews of ten serious quilters during the months of November 2016 - January 2017. Respondents were asked questions about their quilting history, quilting travels, and seriousness of quilting. After the data were collected and transcribed then coded and analyzed for overlapping themes to determine motivations of serious quilters. These motivations include *reaffirming their quilter identity, learning about the quilting from different cultures, seeking inspiration, the adventure of novelty seeking, creating new family history while preserving ancestral history*, and seeking a *sense of belonging* when they are around other quilters. These serious quilters traveled to venues such as retreats, road trips, shop hops, bus tours, and festivals furthered their seriousness with quilting. They created their own trips with friends, joined shop-sponsored trips, and even added in quilting destinations to other trips and vacations.

These findings suggest tourism and serious leisure practitioners must consider combining their studies when it comes to studying participants who partake in serious travel. The seriousness of these quilters led to the types of travel they pursue to further their participation in their leisure activity. These research findings can be used to bridge the gap between these two fields of study, and lead to the development of theories between serious leisure and tourism travels.

## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my best friend, Heather. Thank you for reminding me to eat, sleep, and socialize like a normal human being.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my committee co-chairs, Dr. Woosnam and Dr. Scott, for their guidance and support throughout the course of this research. Without their expertise and direction, this thesis would not have been conducted and written as smoothly as it was. I also extend thanks to my other committee member, Dr. McIntosh, for his expertise and guidance as well.

Thanks also go to my friends and colleagues and the department faculty and staff for making my time at Texas A&M University a great experience. I am also grateful for your encouragement and belief in me throughout my studies.

Finally, thanks to my mother and father for their patience and encouragement, and also to my best friend for helping me stay sane throughout my research.

## CONTRIBUTORS AND FUNDING SOURCES

This work was supervised by a thesis committee consisting of Professor Woosnam and Professor Scott of the Department of Recreation, Park, and Tourism Sciences and Professor McIntosh of the Department of Sociology.

All work for the thesis was completed independently by the student.

There are no outside funding contributions to acknowledge related to the research and compilation of this document.

## NOMENCLATURE

Applique	to add a piece of cut fabric onto an already pieced block with a blanket stitch. It is primarily done by hand, with wool fabric, and the stitches show to make a primitive, rustic
Notions	when someone uses their textile-based craft (e.g., quilting, embroidery, applique, etc.) as a cathartic release from stress, depression, chronic illness, and other ailments.
Piecing	The act of stitching fabric together to create blocks and patterns. <i>Hand piecing</i> is when this is done only by hand, while <i>machine piecing</i> is when the fabric is stitched by a quilting machine.
Serious Leisure	The pursuit of a hobby as a means for relaxation, creativity, or fun, but not for monetary gain. These pursuits take time, money, and can feel like a second career instead of just a hobby.
Social Worlds	Groups of people with shared interests, who do not necessarily meet in a formal setting, where the groups have their own underlying sets of rules, traditions, and guidelines.
Textile Therapy	When someone uses their textile-based craft (e.g., quilting, embroidery, applique, etc.) as a cathartic release from stress, depression, chronic illness, and other ailments.

Quilt	The three-layer sandwich of the quilt top, batting, and a fabric backing that is stitched together and finished with a thin strip of fabric stitched around the outside to cover the unfinished edges.
Quilt Top	The pieced fabrics showcased on the front of the quilt. It can be pieced designs, embroidered, made by hand or machine, colorful, or simple.



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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Background of Study**

Anything a person does in his or her life, whether it is choosing a particular leisure activity or traveling to a destination, has motivation behind it. Motives spur people to travel to a new destination and visit a festival they have never attended before (Backman et al., 1995; Crompton, 1979; Crompton & McKay, 1997; Getz, 1991, 1993, 2010; Iso-Ahola, 1982; Lee, Lee, & Wicks, 2003; Nicholson & Pearce, 2001; Park, Reisinger & Kang, 2008; Scott, 1996; Woosnam, McElroy, & Van Winkle, 2009; Yolal, Çetinal, & Uysal, 2009). The woman battling cancer has a motivation behind her taking a piece of cloth and a needle, and embroidering her frustration and pain into a textile therapy piece for the masses to view (Reynolds, 2002; 2003; 2004). The man or woman who creates quilts for their families, or donates quilts to places or people in need, has a motivation for their work (Dickie, 2011; King, 2011; Piercy & Cheek, 2004; Pöllänen, 2013; Stalp, 2006, Stalp & Conti, 2009). Anywhere one looks, a motivation behind what people are doing can be found, and many of these motivations have been studied.

Studies have been conducted on tourism and festival motivations. Literature can be found on how the quilting industry has boomed as a form of serious leisure, wherein the activity is pursued akin to a career in regards to monetary and time commitments rather than simply a hobby, and as a source of textile therapy. However, while researching the above topics, it became apparent that a gap in research exists on serious quilters' travel motivations. They are mentioned, briefly and tangentially in a few

articles, as quilters who travel, yet little information has been gathered about this particular type of quilter and tourist, and specific articles only pertaining to serious quilters have yet to be published.

The purpose of this current research is to explore why serious quilters travel. A serious quilter is a quilter who attends bus tours, shop hops, quilting festivals, and travels to various cities, states, or even countries outside of their normal day-to-day routine for the purpose of quilting. This type of quilter purchases notions or fabric for quilting and finds inspiration for their own quilting through their journey to and experiences at quilting festivals, shop hops, and bus tours. A shop hop is a type of trip quilters go on, which can be a day trip or longer, where they travel to an area they "hop" from local quilt shop to quilt shop, finding inspiration and buying notions and fabric.

Serious quilters are a different type of tourist. Normally, a person who travels to a place is a consumer tourist, wherein the tourist consumes food, knowledge, or experiences while on their trip (Everett, 2012). Serious quilters also can do these things, but they are also “producer” tourists. At many of these festivals, cruises, and shop hops, quilters are making their own projects, even during their trip. This makes them a different type of tourist than those who travel to music festivals, attend cruise tours, or travel for the joy of traveling (Everett, 2012).

In this proposal, literature will be reviewed on two main topics: quilting and serious leisure. Literature concerning tourism motivations, serious traveling, textile therapy, and social worlds will also be considered. This literature review will showcase what has been researched within different fields in an effort to highlight the gap where

research on serious quilters has yet to be conducted. Revealing this gap will open up the opportunity to explore the motivations of serious quilters through their involvement in festivals, bus tours, and shop hops.

From this research, a host of practical implications and applications will be made available. For instance, quilting festivals and their organizers and planning organizations may be in a better position to increase participation of serious quilters at their events. New festivals specifically geared for serious quilters can be created and modified by understanding their travel motivations. Quilt shops and quilting cruises could even use study findings to incorporate into their business plans in an effort to attract more quilters to their particular shop or cruise. This study will also open up the opportunity for further studies of serious quilters, broadening the academic knowledge base of this particular social world.

### **Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of this research is to bring to light those motivations and ascertain why serious quilters travel. This research will also highlight what makes a serious quilter, and the types of venues serious quilters travel to during their leisure pursuits. Knowing this information can provide existing and newly developing festivals with a better understanding of their clientele, and allow event planners the opportunities to better tailor their specific festival to fit the needs and wants of serious quilters. This work will also provide a beginning point of subsequent research to examine connections between serious quilter motivations and socio-economic and economic impacts serious quilters have on festivals, cruises, and bus tour destinations.

### **Research Question**

The following questions guided this study:

1. In what ways are quilters serious about their avocation?
2. What are travel destinations of serious quilters?
3. What are the motivations that spur serious quilters to travel for their leisure pursuits?

### **Delimitations**

For this research, I chose a qualitative design because of the nature of quilting to tell a story (Peircy & Cheek, 2004; Reynolds 2002, 2003, 2004; Stalp 2006). Not only is there a story within every quilt, but there is a story within every quilter. Since I am also a quilter, the ability to encourage this story out of my informants was bolstered. Being able to draw honest information from interviewees is vital to qualitative research (Emerson, 2001; Emerson, Fretz, Shaw, 2011). The intentions of this study (created this way) are to allow the story to unfold as to how these serious quilters travel freely, without having the quilters feel as if they are being forced into a label or box. They can use whatever words, phrases, and definitions they want to explain why they travel for their leisure in the ways they showcased.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review will summarize published research articles on two main topics—quilting and serious leisure—as well as research on textile therapy, serious traveling, tourism motivations, and social worlds. This literature review also explores key concepts from each of the topics to help ascertain the gap in the research pertaining to the social world of serious quilters. This literature review will mainly focus on the two main topics – quilting and serious leisure – and draw on literature focusing on the subtopics mentioned above as needed to further expose the gap within research published on these topics. By ascertaining this gap in the research, new studies can be revealed and researched.

#### **Tourism Motivations**

Tourism motivations have been researched by many researchers, including Backman et al. (1995), Crompton and McKay (1997), Iso-Ahola (1982), Lee, Lee, and Wicks (2003), Woosnam, McElroy, and Van Winkle (2009), and Yolal, Çetinal, & Uysal (2009). Having the ability to understand why people travel to certain locations or venues is a great resource to have in the tourism field. It can determine what types of destinations attract certain people, or what types of people are attracted to a specific type of location or venue. Several dimensions of motives have been found.

Crompton and McKay (1997) examined tourist motivations and specifically focused on festival attendees. They found six distinct motivation factors among festival attendees: *cultural exploration, novelty/regression, recover equilibrium, known-group*

*socialization, external interaction, and gregariousness*. Many others have conducted research on the attendance of festival-goers and the motivations surrounding travels to their chosen festivals. Crompton (1979), Mohr et al (1993), Murray (1964), Nicholson & Pearce (2001), Park, Reisinger, & Kang (2008), Scott (1996), and Uysal, Gahan, & Martin, (1993) all studied how individuals attend festivals. From their respective research, these authors noted that individuals attend festivals for a variety of reasons. *Family togetherness, repeat attendance, and community coherence* were among the differences between motivational factors of festival motivations and tourist motivations (Crompton, 1979; Mohr et al, 1993; Park, Reisinger, & Kang, 2008; Scott 1996; and Uysal, Gahan, & Martin; 1993).

Crompton and McKay (1997) refer to these motivation factors as “push-pull” factors, based on the works of Iso-Ahola (1982). Push factors are what “push” people to escape from their normal lives (Crompton & McKay, 1997). Push factors would be needing to take a vacation from a stressful job or home life, a need for adventure, or a need for a change in routine. This type of factor is predominantly internal to the individual (Iso-Ahola, 1982). The person has this need for a change of scenery or routine, realizes their desire to act upon this need, and then uses this desire to find a destination to travel.

Pull factors are what draw individuals towards a destination. Pull factors are finding a festival one has never attended, a previously unvisited destination with new people to meet, or a calm place in the mountains to hike. Largely, pull factors exist outside the individual and are external (Iso-Ahola, 1982). The traveler finds the



destination, or type of destination, first, then, over time, develops the desire to visit such a place, such as novelty, relaxation, or socialization (Crompton & McKay, 1997). With a mix of both push- and pull-factors, individuals can realize their desires to travel to festivals, events, and destinations, and in many cases, act upon those desires.

These two types of factors serve to explain why someone chooses to travel, and whether they choose a specific destination over another. Sometimes, people feel a need to visit a new town, state, or even country. The reasons behind this can be push factors, pull factors, or even both, depending on why the individual has the urge to travel. These urges to travel can consist of motivations such as to escape their desk job for a week to relax on a beach, or to satiate a desire to visit ancient ruins on a different continent. The key is to figure out which of these types of motivations drives people to certain festivals, like why serious quilters travel to the International Quilt Festival in Houston, Texas, and other unique festivals like the one in Sisters, Oregon, Carthage, Texas, or Huntsville, Alabama.

Motivations themselves can be viewed in many ways. Dann (1981) stated motivations can be interpreted as fantasy, wherein the tourist is searching for that place where they can “free themselves from the mores that inhibit their capacity for enjoyment and home” (p. 191). Dann (1981) also stated this was not a bad thing per se, as motivations differ in intentions, and this can enable an individual to travel to new places. This information can be useful to the destinations in question, as they can use these pull factors to their advantage. This information can bring to light the positive implications of negatively connoted motivations (Dann, 1981). Knowing how these motivations are

perceived by the tourist and by the business in question can help aid in the creation of motivational scales.

Any time a person goes to a destination, their motivation behind going can be found through these methods. The person could be trying to escape their hectic day to day life, or maybe they just needed a change in routine. These methods behind motivation factors, however, are not limited to finding only the motivations behind those attending festivals or traveling to a specific destination. The same methods can be used to determine the motivation factors behind why people choose to participate in a certain leisure activity, like quilting.

Serious quilters belong to a social world of tourism that has not been researched from this point of view as of late. While tourists and tourism motivations have been researched extensively (Backman et al., 1995; Crompton & McKay, 1997; Iso-Ahola, 1982; Lee, Lee, & Wicks, 2003; Woosnam, McElroy, & Van Winkle, 2009; Yolal & Uysal, 2009), and festival motivations has also been researched (Crompton, 1979; Mohr et al, 1993; Murray, 1964; Nicholson & Pearce, 2001; Park, Reisinger, & Kang, 2008; Scott, 1996; Uysal, Gahan, & Martin, 1993) quilting itself has largely been researched from aspects such as textile therapy and serious leisure, but not in conjunction with or in the context of tourism.

### **Serious Leisure and Social Worlds**

Serious leisure itself has been studied by many scholars over the years. Stebbins (1979) claimed that serious leisure is, “A systemic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist, or volunteer activity that participants find so substantial and interesting that they launch

themselves on a career, centered on acquiring and expressing its special skills, knowledge, and experience” (p. 3). Having written much on serious leisure over the last 40 years, Stebbins (1996) considered that the serious leisure participant can be identified by six unique characteristics:

1) Serious leisure is leisure in which its practitioners encounter the occasional need to persevere, although this need is significantly less acute than in some occupations and significantly more acute than its opposite, casual leisure; 2) Moreover, a career awaits the serious leisure enthusiast. It consists of a history of turning points, levels of achievement and involvement, and a set of background contingencies; 3) Third, personal effort is common in such leisure, as based on extensive skill, knowledge or experience and oftentimes a combination of these; 4) Those who engage in serious leisure derive various durable benefits from it, including self-actualization, self-enrichment, feelings of group accomplishment, and enhancement of self-image; 5) Further, they find in connection with serious leisure activity a unique social world composed of special norms, beliefs, values, morals, events, principles, and traditions; 6) These five distinguishing qualities are the soil in which the sixth takes root: practitioners come to identify strongly with their avocation. (p. 46)

Stebbins (2005) also notes that serious leisure is “uncoerced” and the participants “feel they are doing something they are not pushed to do” or “obliged to do” (p. 350). This means participation in the chosen leisure activity is undertaken by choice. It is not a forced activity, nor is it something they are paid to accomplish. The participant willingly

engages in the activity of their own volition. This is the case irrespective of participant commitment level in the activity.

Gahwiler and Havitz (1998) noted in their research on commitment that different levels of psychological commitment exist within serious leisure and social worlds. They state that, “Psychological commitment to activity did appear to be positively related to psychological commitment and behavior loyalty” to service providers and social worlds (p.18). As a participant becomes more involved in their chosen serious leisure activity, the more likely they are to be involved within the social world. Through this increased involvement, they are also more likely to support and be loyal to businesses involved in the same serious leisure activity (Gahwiler & Havitz, 1998). This involvement and loyalty are what create the social world of said serious leisure activity, no matter what type of activity has been chosen (Gahwiler & Havitz, 1998).

Social worlds are frequently mentioned in the context of researching focusing on serious leisure. Shibutani (1955) defined a social world as “a universe of regularized mutual response” (p.566). Social worlds are the groups created by a certain serious leisure activity, and are “part of a social organization which is diffuse and amorphous in character” (Ditton, Loomis, & Choi, 1992, p. 35). This means these groups form without a set structure or form, and they grow and morph as the activity and participants change. Those involved in the social world should allow the world they are a part of to grow and change as technologies make it easier to do so, since these worlds focus primarily on common communication channels, these groups should embrace and use technologies, activities, sites, and organizations typical of such social worlds (1992).

Unruh (1979) defined social worlds as “an internally recognizable constellation of actors, organizations, events, and practices” which have “coalesced into a perceived sphere of interest and involvement for participants” (p. 115). These groups do not necessarily meet, either, since they are loosely formed and can encompass people from all over the world (Unruh 1980). Since social worlds are not like group meetings and do not necessarily meet, they “characteristically do not have inclusive membership rosters or even have a vague notion about the extent to which social actors find them meaningful and important”, meaning even those who are heavily involved do not have an idea as to how massive or important these social worlds can be to others involved (Unruh 1980, p. 276).

Unruh (1980) went on to explain there are four different types of identification within social worlds: *voluntary*, *partial*, *multiple*, and *mediated*. One must enter the realm of the social world *voluntarily*, where the participant enters of his/her own free will. According to Unruh, members of the social world (although part of the social world), have only a *partial* knowledge and involvement of the occurrences within the social world. He also noted that many people identify with *multiple* social worlds, as one social world is rarely enough to fully encompass the identity of a person. Finally, Unruh noted that people use their involvement in social worlds as a way to *mediate* their interactions with other individuals or social world participants. Within social worlds, Unruh also found there are four different types of involvement when it can to social worlds. These types of involvement are *strangers*, *tourists*, *regulars*, and *insiders*. *Strangers* lie outside the central concerns of the social world, but they are still a part of

it. *Tourists* are the generic participant who, however, have little commitment to the social world itself. *Regulars* are those who are perpetually involved in the goings on in social world, and are the type of participant that comes to mind when one thinks of a committed member of a social world. Lastly, the *insiders* are the members who are deeply ingrained into the fluid structure of the social world. The *insiders* are the ones who are the most committed, and have the most to lose if the social world dissolves over time.

It is difficult to talk about serious leisure, or leisure activities in general, without mentioning the concept of flow. Csikszentmihayli (1990) explained flow as a necessary component for improve quality of life, as enjoyment leads to a higher appreciation of life, thus leading to an improved quality of life. Flow occurs when the skill level of the participant meets the challenge of the activity, and is characterized by euphoria, peacefulness, and rejuvenation. Flow can be reached in a variety of activities, from biking, playing video games, or even quilting.

From these definitions of serious leisure and characteristics of those who partake in serious leisure, it can be considered that quilting is serious leisure activity as well. It is easy to see how travelling to pursue this serious leisure activity should also be considered a form of serious leisure. Quilting is a serious leisure activity, mainly pursued by women, and it can be either individually done, or in groups, like many other serious leisure activities. Serious quilters view their passion in a similar way. These individuals travel with friends—new and old—across the globe to attend festivals, go on bus tours,

and engage in cruises to quilt and visit shops, while visiting destinations to which they may not have gone otherwise.

### **Quilting**

Research on quilting is a relatively new phenomenon, with major articles being published within the last 15 years (King, 2001; Peirce & Cheek, 2004; Stalp, 2006; Stalp & Conti, 2009; Stalp & Winge, 2008). Many of the other publications found are patterns or “how-to” articles. However, the above articles analyze the impacts of quilting on participants. These articles showcase quilting and quilters in different ways, but mainly from a serious leisure viewpoint.

Quilting as a serious leisure activity has been studied for several years, although quilting has been around for centuries. According to Marybeth Stalp (2006), quilters “express the need to find time and space for quilting”, and many “identify themselves as quilters and develop personal goals”, they then “develop advanced skills” and “spend time learning new skills” (p.106-107), fitting in line with Stebbins’s (1996) first three characteristics. Quilters also “derive personal, social, and familial benefits from quilting”, as well as “self-actualization, self-enrichment, feelings of group accomplishment, and enhancement of self-image” as characteristic four states (Stalp, 2006, p. 107). Characteristic five is also present, as when quilters take on the name “quilter”, they also take on the “norms, beliefs, values, morals, events, principles, and traditions” of this particular social world (Stalp, 2006, p. 107). Finally, all of these characteristics come together to form the final characteristic, as many quilters state that quilting is their “passion” (Stalp, 2006, p. 107).

Stebbins (2005), as mentioned above, notes that serious leisure is “uncoerced” and the participants “feel they are doing something they are not pushed to do” or “obliged to do” (p. 350). Quilting is the same way. Quilters often choose to quilt for their own sake, to either make a beautiful quilt, or just to play around with the pretty fabrics (Stalp, 2006). A segment of quilters may exist that feel as if they are being coerced into making items, especially if they use quilting as a source of income, but at such point, arguably, a cross-over from serious leisure into a profession is occurring.

From these definitions of serious leisure and characteristics of those who partake in serious leisure, it can be considered that quilting is serious leisure activity as well. It is easy to see how travelling to pursue this serious leisure activity should also be considered a form of serious leisure. Quilting is a serious leisure activity, mainly pursued by women, and it can be either individually done, or in groups, like many other serious leisure activities. Serious quilters view their passion in a similar way. These individuals travel with friends, new and old, across the globe to attend festivals, go on bus tours, and engage in cruises to quilt and visit shops, while visiting destinations to which they may not have gone otherwise.

Quilting has grown from a necessary task in domestic work to keep the family warm at night, to a leisure activity an individual participates in to relax (Stalp, 2006). As quilting has evolved, it has become evident that quilting “highlights how women accept, resist, and negotiate traditional notions of gender in families”, especially with the rise of feminist ideals (Stalp, 2006, p.109). Alongside this increase in feminism, quilting itself experienced a boom in activity beginning in the 1970s, and has since grown to a number



indicating that 15% of U.S. households participate in quilting (Stalp, 2006). These households may have one quilter, or several, and they are all involved in quilting in one of many different ways.

Some of these individuals participate in quilting as an individual activity, where they make items for themselves or family members in the comfort of their own home. These individuals amass their tools, fabrics, threads, and projects alone, rather than meeting up with other people. Quilters tend to have their own personal space (sometimes a specific room in their home or a personal building) wherein they keep their materials and projects, and prefer to quilt as an individual in their quilting room or building. These quilters tend to stay away from group events, although they may attend festivals like the International Quilt Festival in Houston, Texas, the Sisters Quilt Festival in Sisters, Oregon, and various other destinations to experience the festivals and purchase new and unique materials (Sisters Quilt Show, 2014, Quilts, Inc., 2004). With the rise of technology, many quilters can buy fabrics and notions (i.e., items such as thread, needles, scissors, rotary cutters, and other tools and small gadgets quilters could need to complete their projects) online, and connect with other quilters in chat rooms and on FaceBook if they wish.

However, quilting can also be a fairly social event. Quilters have a variety of groups they can choose to be a part of, like small groups called “bees”, or larger ones known as “guilds” (Peirce & Cheek, 2004). Online groups have become more prevalent, allowing quilters to join together via social media outlets like FaceBook and interact with other quilters from across the globe without leaving the comforts of their own home

if they prefer. In these different types of groups, the quilters can facilitate a friendly gathering place where they learn new techniques, quilt, and are able to interact with other people who share their love of quilting. Typically, these groups are open to anyone in a particular area, and meet anywhere from once a month to once a week (King, 2001). Normally, these offline guilds or bees meet somewhere public, a room in a local extension office, or a building that can be used for small public events as to facilitate more participation. Online groups typically do not truly have meetings, but a constant exchanging of ideas, patterns, techniques, and pictures of finished projects.

Sometimes at these group functions, the quilters will get together to make “pro-bono” quilts for local charities or places affected by a recent tragedy. Examples of these charitable contributions are quilts being made for babies with HIV, for families affected by natural disasters like earthquakes, floods, and hurricanes, and to donate to women’s or homeless shelters (King, 2001). In recent years, quilts have been made by guilds across the country and donated to people who lost their belongings in disasters like hurricanes, floods, and fires. Many guilds and bees like to have a charity project they work on at meetings throughout the year. The majority of the time, however, members of the guild or bee bring their own individual projects to work on during their guild or bee meetings, as to finish their own projects in the company of and chat with those who also love to quilt as much as they do (Piercy & Cheek, 2004; Stalp & Winge, 2008).

In more recent years, quilters have realized the ability to negotiate space in their homes to create their own quilting space they can go to when they wish to work at home, whether it is a back bedroom in the house or a separate building outside. Such places, in

theory, are not much different from a man's workshop or hobby space (Stalp, 2006). Depending on the space allotted for quilting, these spaces can be set up in two ways. The first is normally for smaller areas and created to easily gather and store all items, fabric, tools, and cutting tables. The second is for larger spaces that can continually be used. These latter areas are designed for maximum ease of finishing a project quickly and efficiently, and provide specific spaces for storing notions and areas that are always clean and readily available for the start of a new project (Stalp, 2006; Stalp & Winge, 2008).

Quilting has created a several-billion dollar industry over the last 50 years, fueled by the increased availability of a larger variety of fabrics, sewing machines, tools, and other technological advancements for at-home use to make this serious leisure activity easier for individuals to participate in than ever before (Stalp, 2006). Couple this with individuals traveling to destinations for quilting, and the economic impact is compounded. In 2003, quilting was listed as a US \$2.27 billion industry (Quilting in America Survey, 2003). Festivals are being held in numerous places across the United States where the prominent showcase or items for sale are quilts and quilting notions. These festivals can be small, hosted by local guilds to sell some items and showcase quilts for a day, or extravagant week-long events like the International Quilt Festival in Houston, Texas, where nearly a thousand shops from across the country come to the George R. Bush Convention Center to sell fabric, quilts, and various other wares and notions to the quilting public, and over 60,000 people attend each year (Talarico, 2014).

Quilt shops have opened storefronts all across the United States, many also having online shops (Stalp & Conti, 2009), and more festivals are happening every year (Festivals-and-Shows, 2015). According to Festivals-and-Shows.com, there were over 346 shows in 2015 (2015). In 2016, there are projected to be closer to 400 (Festivals-and-Shows, 2015). This boom in business is due not only to the increase in quilters over the last few decades, but also partially because of the phenomenon known as the quilter's stash. A "stash" in regards to crafting and quilting is the "overstock of raw materials used in making cultural objects" (Stalp & Winge, 2008). In this case, a quilter's stash is the amassed collection of fabric, thread, and other notions a quilter compiles over a lifetime of quilting. Typically, a quilter continues to acquire and purchase textile items for their craft, like yarn, fabric, floss, etc. even if their stash overtakes the allotted space they have created for it. An adage often heard in quilt shops between quilters who are debating purchasing more fabric is, "She who dies with the biggest stash wins", thus adding a competitive aspect to stash collecting. Quilters buy not only what they need to complete projects (and a little extra just in case they mess up), but fabrics they think are pretty or could potentially use in a project in the future, and typically boast to others about concerning how large their stash has grown relative to fellow quilters in their guild or bee (Stalp & Winge, 2008).

Stalp and Winge (2008) noted that the quilter's inability to control the size of their stash ultimately lead to tension in their relationships with others, especially if they live in the same household. This is a prominent constraint seen by quilters which hinders their involvement with their craft. Since their craft can be done in the home, the choice

between being with family or working on their craft is more noticeable. It is also easier to notice if the quilters are taking up family space with their ever-growing stash.

However, a solution has been realized for this particular problem. Taking the word “stash” literally, many quilters have taken to stashing away their amassed materials, hiding them in plain sight with cleverly disguised storage, or in closets no one else uses, because if the stash is not seen, the quilter, and their families, can pretend it does not exist (Stalp, 2007; Stalp & Winge, 2008). Some quilters even get a rush from hiding the true extent of their stash from their friends, family, or spouses, giving the handcrafter a therapeutic release, which is also, in a way, a form of textile therapy.

Even though the availability of items for quilting and the desire to collect these items to create their own personal stash have increased, some constraints still exist for those participating in quilting. The women interviewed by Stalp (2006) spoke about their own personal constraints to practicing their preferred serious leisure activity. They sometimes felt pressured because they had free time to pursue quilting, and did not spend such time with their families. However, they would overcome this pressure by completing all necessary household work before moving onto their quilts, or by blending family activities with quilting. The latter can be anything from sitting with their family after dinner while cutting out projects to customizing their quilting projects to be able to work on them while waiting at doctor’s appointments or at their children’s sporting events (Stalp, 2006). The former can cause tension within their family, as design processes like cutting out fabric can be messy, leaving little pieces of fabric or strings

everywhere, and taking up considerably more space at the dinner table than the rest of the family would prefer (Stalp & Winge, 2008).

Another way they can balance family and quilting is to quilt while everyone else in the family is at school or work. This, however, becomes different if the quilter views their quilting as a profession, not a serious leisure activity, since families tend to be more forgiving about quilting taking up so much of their time, and space in the house, if those quilts are a source of family income (Stalp & Conti, 2009).

Not all quilters create their quilts for profit. In fact, few of them do, as the majority of quilters do not believe they can charge enough to earn what they believe the quilt is worth (Stalp & Conti, 2009). Most quilters choose to quilt to relieve stress or to just make themselves feel better by working on something beautiful and useful. This phenomenon is known as textile therapy. Textile therapy is a form of art therapy, which is the crafting of something artistic through one or more of many types of textiles, fibers, or other mediums as a way to relax the body and mind from mental or physical difficulties (Reynolds, 2002). It had been used for years to help patients suffering from many different illnesses, from physical illnesses like cancer to mental illnesses like depression, to find peace of mind in creating something they find beautiful. This can be anything from facilitated group therapy meetings to solo crafting nights at home to relax from a stressful day (Dickie, 2011).

Burt and Atkinson (2011) studied quilting as a form of textile therapy to unwind and escape after long days of working in a cubicle or at a computer. Quilting combines many different skills, such as problem-solving, creativity, patience, and determination, in

order to complete a project. New techniques are learned to help overcome challenges within the design process, which helps to facilitate flow, a vital part in both relaxation and leisure activities alike. Several quilters interviewed in the work of Burt and Atkinson (2011) expressed that while quilting, they would become detached from the outside world, from life, and become completely absorbed in their project to the point they would lose track of time. By focusing on their project to this degree, they experienced flow, which would enable them to relax further and reap the rewards of their changed mood long after they finished working on their projects.

Textile therapy through quilting is not just used to take away the stress of a hard day at work. Textile therapy is also used by people with chronic physical illnesses like arthritis, fibromyalgia, and cancer to cope with not only their physical pain, but to relieve any negative emotions or mental illnesses they may face such as anxiety, depression, and loss of self-esteem (Reynolds, 2002; 2003; 2004). Textile therapy is used in many ways to liven the mood of individuals. One way is to choose colors that are either soothing or “happy” to them personally, so every time they look at their project, those colors bring a smile to their face and lift their spirits (Burt & Atkinson, 2011, p. 56).

Another way to experience this change in mood was by working on the project itself. Witnessing the creation of their project right before their own eyes would be soothing because, through their pain, they would notice they were still getting something accomplished, which is validating in and of itself (Reynolds, 2002). Such a feeling of validation can help to relieve mental illnesses individuals with chronic illnesses can face,

like anxiety and depression, because they are still accomplishing something that is beautiful to them, and, in many cases like with quilts, functional for themselves, their families and friends, or even for charity (Reynolds, 2004).

In conjunction with textile therapy, people also travel for their serious leisure as a means to reduce tension in their lives. Travel in and of itself can be seen as stress relieving, especially when traveling to a festival (Crompton & McKay, 1997). Motivational factors such as *escape*, *novelty/regression*, *new experiences*, and *entertainment* can all be reasons why people enjoy traveling to festivals (Backman et al., 1995; Crompton & McKay, 1997; Iso-Ahola, 1982; Lee, Lee, & Wicks, 2003; Woosnam, McElroy, & Van Winkle, 2009; Yolal & Uysal, 2009). In some of the aforementioned cases, people traveled to festivals because it was a leisure activity for them, and they felt a desire to travel to the festival to explore this dimension of their leisure activity (Crompton & McKay, 1997; Iso-Ahola, 1982; Stebbins, 2000; Stebbins 2005).

Quilters travel in several different ways. Quilters can participate in shop hops created and hosted by local quilt shops, similar to ones like the Schoolhouse Shop Hop (Schoolhouse Shop Hop, 2010). Shop hops like these compile quilt shops as destinations, and quilters travel to them via vans or charter bus. These shop hops can be day trips or overnight trips (Schoolhouse Shop Hop, 2010). There is also an international shop hop known as the "Row by Row Experience", which runs from June to September, and has shops from every U. S. state and Canada that participate (Row by Row, 2007). Other quilters can engage in quilt cruise tours, like ones offered through places like



World of Quilts Travel or Stitchin' Heaven Travel (Roberts, 2004; Stitchin' Heaven Travel, 2006). On quilt cruise tours, classes are available onboard the ship and quilt shops are visited at the destinations reached (Roberts, 2004; Stitchin' Heaven Travel, 2006).

Quilters can also travel to festivals. Quilting festivals occur each year across the United States, from the International Quilt Festival in Houston, Texas to the Sisters Outdoor Quilt Show in Sisters, Oregon (Quilts, Inc., 2004; Sisters Quilt Show, 2014). Quilters can attend these festivals in groups run through shops, or can go on their own with friends. While the International Quilt Festival is held in late October to early November, the Sisters Outdoor Quilt Show is held the second Saturday in July, and has over ten thousand visitors attend each year to see the more than 1300 quilts displayed on the outsides of buildings (Sisters Quilt Show, 2014). Quilters can attend festivals of a variety of styles, lengths, and location. Some are indoors, like the International Quilt Festival, while others are held outdoors like the Sisters Outdoor Quilt Show in Sisters, Oregon (Quilts, Inc., 2004; Sisters Quilt Show, 2014). With the variety of shows available for quilters to attend, there are many opportunities for serious quilters to travel for their craft. Shows can be found in nearly every U.S. State, and even in different parts of the world (Festivals-and-Shows, 2015). These quilt shows vary in size and length, with the largest being the International Quilt Festival in Houston, Texas (Quilts, Inc., 2004). Most quilt shows, however, are not as grandiose as the IQF. Typical quilt shows are shows like, the Heritage Quilters of Huntsville Show in Huntsville, Alabama, the Quilt Fiesta: Quilts Classic to Contemporary show in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and the

Jackson Hole Quilt Festival in Jackson Hole, Wyoming (Festivals-and-Shows, 2015).

These shows are smaller in scale, with festival goers nearing three or four thousand, and only last two to three days (Festivals-and-Shows, 2015).

Quilting has changed from its original form of necessary domesticity. The quilting of this age is more of a form of art, of leisure, and of textile therapy. The different ways in which quilters pursue their quilting can take them on different paths, both literally and metaphorically. Quilting as a form of leisure can become serious leisure, and from there, quilters can turn to traveling to pursue their leisure. These types of quilters - serious quilters - attend bus tours, shop hops, quilting festivals, and travels to various cities, states, or even countries outside of their normal day-to-day routine for the purpose of quilting, purchasing notions or fabric for quilting, or to find inspiration for their own quilting. These types of quilters have not been studied from the lens of tourism, nor have their motivations been researched.

### **Summary**

As shown above, articles have been written about motivations from the perspective of leisure or tourism, especially about the motivations of festival attendees. Quilting as a serious leisure activity and the motivations behind their quilting has been studied, even from a textile therapy perspective. However, a segment of quilting has been overlooked within the tourism and serious leisure literatures: the travel motivations of the serious quilter.

Shop hops, bus tours, and cruises are dedicated to those who want to travel while they quilt. Quilt shops exist that are specifically dedicated to these serious quilters.

These people travel all over the country, and sometimes exotic places like Hawaii or the Caribbean, to take classes and quilt things to remember their trips. This is a segment of tourism that has not been specifically looked at from this aspect. As such, it is briefly mentioned in serious leisure articles, but more as a side-note stating some quilters travel occasionally. However, the way these quilters travel is an aspect of tourism and serious leisure that has not yet been realized to its full potential.

From this research, a host of practical implications and applications will be made available. For instance, quilting festivals and their organizers and planning organizers will better be able to ascertain how to increase participation of serious quilters at their events. Those planning and coordinating festivals can apply the knowledge unearthed by this research to be in a better position to create new festivals geared towards serious quilters with findings this research. Organizers and planners within quilt shops and quilting cruise tours can incorporate this newfound data into their business plans in an effort to attract more quilters to their particular shop or cruise. This study will also create the opportunity for further studies surrounding serious quilters, broadening the academic knowledge base of this particular social world.

### CHAPTER III

#### RESEARCH METHODS

The purpose of this research is to explore the motivations of the social world of serious quilters. A serious quilter is a quilter who attends bus tours, shop hops, quilting festivals, and travels to various cities, states, or even countries outside of their normal day-to-day routine for the purpose of quilting, purchasing notions or fabric for quilting, or to find inspiration for their own quilting. These serious quilters are part of the social world, although little to no research has been published concerning why quilters travel.

#### **Data Collection**

For this study, I conducted 10 interviews with serious quilters, who were chosen by the snowball sampling method through family friends and those I spoke with at the 2015 International Quilt Festival. These interviews were analyzed and resulting themes, alongside a thorough review of motivations research within the tourism literature. The reasons behind why people began quilting and traveling as a result of quilting vary from quilter to quilter, so hearing from a quilter firsthand generated novel items not found in existing motivation scales for tourists. For this project, I interviewed 10 quilters over the fall of 2016, some of whom I initially met and spoke with during a field study at the International Quilt Festival in 2015 and expressed interest in being potentially interviewed for this project. They were given the opportunity to not participate if they no longer desired. I encountered a dozen quilters who traveled and were interested in sharing their narratives with me for my project. They each left email addresses and phone numbers as potential ways to contact them for prospective interviews.

To choose the serious quilters for the qualitative interview, I contacted each of the serious quilters who left their contact information with me for this purpose. I verified that each serious quilter fit the criteria of a serious quilter (i.e., is a quilter, travels for their quilting leisure). Once I verified all of the potential interviewees were serious quilters, I also verified that they still wished to be interviewed. I used the snowball method of random sampling to find more interviewees until I reached data saturation. I verified that each of my prospective interviewees could be interviewed, face-to-face, via skype or over the phone during the timeframe scheduled for the interviews. I scheduled the interviews to take place over the fall months of 2016, primarily in October and November with some falling into December and January. Data saturation was met by the tenth interview, so no more interviews were conducted.

These qualitative interviews took place over the phone, and via skype in an unobtrusive environment. These interviews, either via Skype or over the phone, were audio-recorded with consent from each interviewee in order to accurately quote the individual. Each interview lasted a minimum of one hour, with a few lasting up to 90 minutes. Handwritten notes were also taken during the interview to supplement the audio-recording. Enclosed is a list of interview questions I asked the interviewees (see Appendix B) to ascertain reasons as to why they travel for their quilting leisure. I used the interview script of questions as a guide for the interviews, which I repeated for each of the ten interviewees.

Within this study, I needed to be aware of data saturation so I could accurately gauge when I had interviewed enough quilters. Data saturation would be met when no new

information was gathered from the interviews with the serious quilters. It was ascertained that a minimum of ten interviews would need to be conducted, possibly up to 20 if data saturation had not been met yet. However, by interview 10, I was only receiving information that had been brought up by other serious quilters. I chose to stop interviewing after the tenth interviewee due to such saturation.

### **Data Analysis**

Once I finished the qualitative data collection, I analyzed it for reoccurring themes as to why serious quilters travel for their quilting pleasure. I analyzed my qualitative data by mapping out potential codes (i.e. themes) found within each interview. I then analyzed the code maps for codes that overlap, were intriguing, or stood out as an item of importance to the interviewees (Emerson, 2001; Emerson, Fretz, Shaw, 2011). I hoped to ascertain other themes that are not present in existing motivations studies. After the qualitative interviews were analyzed, and the coding maps created and studied, a collective narrative formed, showcasing why quilters feel the desire to travel for their leisure activity.

### **Trustworthiness**

In this study, a number of tactics were used to ensure honesty from the participants. At the beginning of each interview, the informants were told they could choose whether or not to answer the questions posed to them. If they were uncomfortable with anything, they could ask to move onto the next question without penalty. They were encouraged to share their quilting story, their journey from the beginning of their quilting days to the current time, their trips, and anything else they

wanted to share about quilting. They were told there was no right or wrong way to answer the questions, especially when the participant stated they thought they were babbling and giving too much information. The interviewees were also informed that I was also a serious quilter and had been quilting most of my life. This helped build a rapport with the interviewees, since I understood their leisure activity and the vernacular associated with quilting. This helped ensure accuracy within the data collection. Since I conducted the interviews and data analysis, I had to be aware of my own potential biases about quilting, serious quilting, and travel for quilting prior to data collection (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

I had to be aware of my experiences in quilting, serious quilting, traveling for quilting, and past encounters of quilters in social aspects. Since I am young for a quilter, I am sometimes not taken seriously by older quilters until they realize that I am a quilter like them. I would explain that I had been quilting for 20 years at the time of the interviews, and have traveled to the important festivals early within the interviews, so not only would the interviewees know that I am a serious quilter like they are, but that I understand the want and need to travel for my quilting. This gave me an advantageous insight when interviewing the quilters because I understood the vernacular used in the social world, and they trusted me to understand how important quilting is to them (McCracken, 1988).

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

The findings from this research project are organized into three sections. The first section, Seriousness of Quilters, pertains to how the quilters I interviewed are serious about their quilting. The second section, Types of Venues, showcases the different venues and types of trips serious quilters take, from road trips and cruises to attending festivals. The final section, Quilter Motivations, expands upon the themes and motivations for serious quilters to travel, which span identity-seeking to novelty-seeking behaviors.

#### **Seriousness of Quilters**

When people participate in a leisure activity, especially an activity that takes a lot of time and effort, the level of seriousness they have for that activity is put into question. From outside the social world, these participants are looked at to see if their level of seriousness indeed makes their activity qualify as serious leisure, not just a hobby. Quilters are no exception. Quilting is seen as both a hobby and a serious leisure activity, and the quilters who participate can fall within those categories as well, depending on their level of involvement.

Stebbins' work (2006) on serious leisure puts forward six different characteristics that showcase how a person is actually considered a serious participant. These six characteristics are viewed in the context of quilting to verify that the respondents are serious leisure participants when it comes to their quilting. The ten informants view their



quilting as a serious leisure activity, and reflect the six characteristics of serious leisure that Stebbins advanced.

The first characteristic of a serious leisure participant, according to Stebbins (2006) is “leisure in which its practitioners encounter the occasional need to persevere, although this need is significantly less acute than in some occupations and significantly more acute than its opposite, casual leisure” (p. 46). Participants can face challenges when it comes to being involved in their leisure activity. Quilters have the option of employing easier methods as they create their quilts. They can buy them or have them made by other people, so they do not even have to be involved in the making of their quilt. However, the informants in this study expressed a need to be involved. They craved being in their sewing room and creating their quilts, even if their family is not keen on it. Many quilters had families, and had to work around their family life and even their career. Sometimes, quilters even had to work around loss, such as the death of a close family member or even a divorce, and continue their quilting. It could be easy, after an event such as those just mentioned, to pack up the sewing room and stop quilting. But the quilters persevered, no matter the circumstance. Quilting is their passion, their relaxation, and they need quilting to “escape problems” and find a “happy place” to be until they can rejoin reality, even if that means they “stay in pajamas all weekend and sew,” like Mary frequently does.

The second characteristic of a serious leisure participant involves the potential career aspect of the leisure activity. “Moreover, a career awaits the serious leisure enthusiast. It consists of a history of turning points, levels of achievement and

involvement, and a set of background contingencies” (Stebbins, 2006, p. 46). This level of commitment means the leisure activity essentially becomes like a career. It takes up many hours of the day, like a professional career would, except most of the time the participants do not make any money from their leisure activity. Quilters will sometimes spend several hours a day working on quilts, especially if they are retired. Those working full time jobs will spend their entire weekend in their sewing room, either stitching or cutting out a project. Even while both working full time jobs, Carrie and Mary have been known to sew together on the weekends, and they even stated that they would lose track of time while quilting.

The third characteristic of serious leisure participation states “personal effort is common in such leisure, as based on extensive skill, knowledge or experience and oftentimes a combination of these” (Stebbins 2006, 46). Quilting can be a tedious skill, especially if a quilter chooses to quilt more traditionally by piecing their quilt by hand (stitching the fabric pieces of a quilt top together), as well as quilting it by hand (the decorative stitching used to attach the three layers of a quilt together). Even when making quilts solely by machine, the entire process of making a quilt is precise, exact, and it can take days, weeks, and even years to finish a quilt, depending on the intricacy of the pattern and designs. When it comes to hand piecing, stitches are praised for being 1/10 of an inch long, and perfectly even, as Pam confirmed when stating she and her quilting friends used to quilt by hand and would brag about their tiny stitches. To stitch at that level takes practice and skill, and the more experience a hand piecer has, the better his or her stitches are, and the more respected they are. When hand quilting, which

is the decorating top stitching on a quilt, also takes a lot of skill, and knowledge as to types of needles, threads, and designs to use on certain fabrics and quilt patterns.

Machine piecing and quilting takes an entirely different skill and knowledge set. To piece by machine, although it requires less skill than to do by hand, still has its own knowledge set. A quilter needs to know how their machine works, what it can do, and what stitches and feet are used for certain fabrics, stitches, and seams. Machine quilting is more complex, usually using an entirely different machine than for piecing. These machines can be highly computerized and technologically advanced, requiring many hours of lessons to learn how to use it safely and properly. To learn to piece and quilt in any of these ways, it takes patience and effort on the part of the quilter. They have to want to learn to quilt in this way, and be dedicated to learning this craft, since a hobby this intricate cannot be forced upon someone.

Stebbins' fourth characteristic is "those who engage in serious leisure derive various durable benefits from it, including self-actualization, self-enrichment, feelings of group accomplishment, and enhancement of self-image" (2006, 46). One of the main reasons quilters gather in their guilds, bees, and go on trips is to be with other quilters. When they are together, especially when they are working on guild or bee projects (which are usually charity projects), they receive that feeling of accomplishment, that they are making a difference. Many of the also just enjoy the "gossip" as Natalie puts it, or getting together in their quilting group and just "talk, talk, talking" like Angie's group tends to do. Sherrie also loves the socialization aspect, as does Pam, who says her quilting group meetings are her "only form of socialization" now that she is retired and

they “keep [her] sane”. Some quilters also work together in groups to create charity quilts that they donate to homeless or women’s shelters, hospitals, nursing homes, and even donate to sell to contribute to scholarships.

The fifth characteristic of serious leisure participation is that the participants “find in connection with serious leisure activity a unique social world composed of special norms, beliefs, values, morals, events, principles, and traditions” (Stebbins 2006, 46). The quilting social world is vast, and spans both small group settings like quilting bees and guilds, and spans to online forums and even Instagram and Facebook. This social world has its own rules, its own must-see places, and brings quilters from all over the world together through its festivals and online presence. Many quilters are part of quilting bees and guilds, which are groups that get together and quilt either once a week or once a month. Angie and Pam are both highly involved in their quilting groups. Even if they are part of different groups, quilters share many of the same beliefs. The prominent quilter belief is the adage, “He or She who dies with the most fabric, wins”, which is used to justify the stashes they accumulate. “I like finding things I just have to add to my stash,” Angie stated, and many quilters share her belief.

Technology has changed quilting as well, with the rise in popularity among social media forms like Instagram and Facebook. Mary and Carrie are both avid users of Instagram because of how much of the quilting social world is showcased on Instagram. “You can talk and interact with quilter online, and there is this huge online community there,” Mary said. “You can follow shops, fabric companies, pattern companies...other quilters, big name quilters or small quilters...and it’s just amazing!”

The sixth and final characteristic of a serious leisure participant is arguably the most evident within the quilting world: “practitioners come to identify strongly with their avocation (Stebbins 2006, 46). This is the strongest one seen among quilters. They identify themselves immediately as quilters. “We are quilters,” Lynn stated in her interview. “Quilting; it’s what we do!” Each quilter is proud to be a quilter, and there can even be some debate between them on whether or not something they do makes them a ‘real’ quilter or not, such as machine quilting their quilt instead of hand quilting. Back in the early days of quilting, to use a machine to quilt was seen as “cheating” according to both Natalie and Pam. It does not matter what type of quilter you talk to, whether they quilt by machine or hand, they all identify strongly as a quilter. Through their quilter identities, they also strive to travel to various venues in the quilting social world, such as retreats, road trips, shop hops, bus tours, and festivals, to further their seriousness with quilting.

### **Types of Venues**

My research revealed that throughout the history of quilting travels, many types of trips have emerged. These trips can be sanctioned by quilt shops or tour groups, or they can be created by the quilters themselves as trips they take with their friends and family. These trips are mostly group events, though some can be individual endeavors. Various types of venues where these quilters traveled were noted by the respondents. Popular venues included cruises, shop hops, festivals, and personal road trips.

### *Retreats*

Retreats are a type of quilting trip where quilters stay at a location with other quilters for a minimum of one night and two days where they work on quilting projects. These retreats can be sponsored by shops that provide projects for the quilters to work on at a location like a cabin or rental house. The shops will usually hire a teacher to teach the quilters how to make the project on the retreat. Quilters normally provide their own machines, and sometimes bring their own projects to finish on the side. Retreats can also be made by quilters and their friends to do on their own, where they do not have shop sponsorship or a teacher, but they get together and rent a cabin or house together and create their own retreat. They can bring their own personal projects to work on, work on a large quilting project together, or a combination of both.

Sherrie has created a retreat before with her daughter, Lynn, and her granddaughters as well. This one was in Bastrop, Texas. “It was a wonderful trip.” Sherrie said. “We hit all of the quilt shops from Corpus to Bastrop. It was a lot of shops, in a lot of little towns that I don’t remember the names of.” Sherrie stated that remembering the names of the towns and shops are not important to her, as she is more interested in the memories being made than the names of the places she has been. Sometimes, while on the way to retreats, quilters will find nearby quilt shops to visit. On the retreat Sherrie and her family took, they shopped at all the quilt shops on the way to the place they stayed at, which was a treehouse they stayed at for two or three nights. Sherrie said it was one of her favorite trips because they were all together and sewing on their own projects. “I got to spend time working on some projects, and hang out with all

of my girls.... It's rare to have all of us in one city now, and it was a wonderful trip.” Many of the retreats quilters create are to kick back, relax, and quilt with friends and family. These retreats are a way for the quilters to escape from their town, their lives, and go to a new place where they can stay for a few days and quilt.

Retreats may also be sponsored by particular shops. Some shops have a retreat center already built in with their store, but most will rent cabins or other similar facilities for the retreat. When a shop sets up a retreat it is usually themed around a specific teacher or class that will be taught during the retreat. It is common to learn new techniques at a retreat sponsored by a shop. The quilters stay for at least one night at the retreat, learning and quilting at the event. Many quilters will also bring personal projects to work on as they are there so they have something else to quilt during the retreat.

### *Road Trips*

Quilting road trips are similar to road trips for other hobbies and leisure activities. Usually put together by families or groups of friends, these trips can be daytrips or overnight stays, depending on how long the trip is. Quilters ride together in their own vehicles, and attend classes, see new shops or see other quilting events together. Quilting road trips can be similar in form to a shop hop (see next section) except they are not sponsored by a shop, nor is there a passport for the event. However, the quilters may hop from quilt shop to quilt shop while on their road trip in a similar fashion as they would a shop-sanctioned shop hop.

Brenda went on a road trip with a girlfriend she met only a few months before. They had met and bonded at her 50<sup>th</sup> high school reunion. A man she went to school

with had seen her post photos on Facebook and when he saw Brenda, he introduced her to his wife and they instantly bonded through quilting. They kept in contact after the reunion and planned a trip together to see a quilting teacher they both loved, Bonnie Hunter. Brenda thought it was hilarious because she “had never met this lady before August” and “in November [they] went to Raleigh [NC] and spent two nights” together to go on this road trip to see Bonnie Hunter. “And I hit every quilt shop between here and there, and we hit seven of them that were around Raleigh while we were there,” Brenda recollected about the event. The two of them created a quilting road trip to see Bonnie Hunter and quilt shops on the way there and back, and would not have done that had they not met. “It was crazy, because we barely knew each other,” said Brenda. “But the road trip was great.” Creating road trips with friends is a common trip for quilters. As Natalie stated, “girlfriend road trips are very important!”

One resource that quilters use when they travel is a book called the Quilter’s Companion. Sarah described it as “a yellow pages for quilt stores” and it is “really handy to have.” Quilt shops strive to have their information printed within the Quilter’s Companion, which will contain their hours, phone number, address, and website. Most shops do want to be printed within the book, since it can bring more people to their shop, and Sarah said “you can find pretty much every shop in the country [in the Quilter’s Companion].” Quilter’s Companions can be bought online, and even be found in many quilt shops across the country. This is a valuable resource for any quilter who travels, even with the rise of technology. “Nowadays,” Sarah said, “you can just plug in Corpus



to Washington online and look at shops on the way...but it's still nice to have the little book."

### *Shop Hops*

Shop hops are another trip that quilters frequently attend. These can be daytrips, weekend long trips, or even last over the course of several months. Shop hops have a list of shops within a guide or passport which quilters can buy to participate. When the quilter visits a shop during the time of the shop hop, the shop will stamp the passport. If a quilter fills out their passport during the shop hop, they usually win a prize or are eligible for a larger drawing. These trips are sponsored by a company or the shops involved.

Brenda described shop hops as a trip "created with a group of stores" where "there's usually a prize when you hit all of them." She has been on many of these kinds of trips. These trips have a guide or a passport for the event and when a quilter takes the passport or guide to a shop, they mark or stamp it. At the last stop, the quilter can turn in their passport or guide and receive a prize or be entered into a drawing for a larger prize. Shop hops were not Brenda's favorite trip, but Carrie loves them because of the free items. "If you fill up the pass, you can be put into a drawing and win some really cool things like machines and fabric!"

Sherrie also attends shop hops. She repeatedly attends the shop hop in her area. It is a smaller shop hop, only lasting a few days and has a couple of shops in the area to attend. Local area shop hops are more common in places that have quilt shops that are spread apart, as the shop hop drives visitors to each of the shops. Even though the same

shops are in the shop hop, Sherrie goes back because she can find something new there every time. “That’s why I keep going to the same shop hop every year,” she told me. “The shop is the same, but there is always something new, something I haven’t seen before.” Sherrie loves to see and experience and do new things, so she attends the shop hops because “there’s always something new in the shops, whether its patterns or fabrics, and they gear up for the shop hop, and it’s a great place to get new items and a great time to get new ideas and inspiration.”

Some shop hops can be statewide. The Quilt Across Texas shop hop, hosted by Stitchin Heaven, is a state-wide shop hop held in the month of September (Stitchin Heaven Travel, 2006). Between 75 and 100 shops across the state of Texas elect to be a part of this 30-day shop hop. Throughout the month, quilters will visit the shops on the passport, getting it stamped at each shop they visit. This particular shop hop has the state divided into different regions, so as quilters either fill out the entire passport or those within one of the regions during the month of September, they turn in the passport to win prizes.

The Row by Row Experience is an international shop hop based mostly within the United States and parts of Canada (Row by Row, 2007). This is not a typical shop hop. This one takes place over the course of three months during the summer, which includes hundreds of shops. Carrie has been on it with her friend Mary several times. Carrie described the Row by Row as “fun”, and is something she enjoys attending every year. The Row by Row is different every year, and each shop creates its own row based on the theme of the year. Quilters can get the free pattern of the row, or they can

purchase a kit made by the shop that contains all the fabric to make their row. Carrie loves being a part of this shop hop because she can make a quilt from these rows. “You just need to make seven rows into a quilt and turn it into a shop and if you were the first one in that shop you could win a prize!” said Carrie. “One of my friends has won three years in a row! I’ve never finished a Row by Row quilt, but I still enjoy it.” Mary is the friend that Carrie does the Row by Row Experience with, and she “loves that one” and thinks it is a “fantastic” shop hop to complete. Mary also likes that she can visit new towns on these types of shop hops. “Some I had no idea even existed, and sometimes you get lost in those little towns. Mary noted that every shop has a different personality: “And it’s great to be able to go in and feel the atmosphere of a new shop.” This particular shop hop may have only been around for a few years, but it is a popular shop hop because of the duration and the variety of shops and free patterns.

### *Bus Tours*

Bus tours are a fairly common way quilters travel. Normally these are sanctioned by a shop or a festival, and quilters can pay to be on the bus tour. These tours can be day trips to and from a specific event, or can be a several day-long trip. The busses will take the quilters to and from their destinations. Sometimes the itineraries on these bus tours included more than just quilt shops and events, and quilters will visit local hot spots like museums, historical monuments, and other nearby places. At the International Quilt Festival, quilters can purchase tickets to bus tours sponsored by the festival, which will take them to historic places around Houston, local quilt shops, and museums. Bus tours can also be sponsored by shops. Stitchin’ Heaven Travel (a widely known quilt shop in

Texas that hosts quilting trips) creates bus tours across the United States, where they fly quilters to a location to attend the bus tour they created in that area. These tours usually travel across several cities, stopping at quilt shops, festivals, and other places such as alpaca farms, museums, and national parks, so the quilters experience a well-rounded trip of the area.

Bus tours are not commonly created by individuals, though it does happen. Sometimes a large group of quilters will rent a charter bus to attend an event, like a large quilt festival, and head to the event together. They will also usually stop at quilt shops along the way. They do this because, depending on the number of people going, it can be cost-effective to attend a large quilt festival this way, and they have plenty of room for anything they happen to buy at the event. However, with more festivals and shops offering discounted shipping, and airline tickets and rental car prices being more affordable, this type of personal bus tour is becoming obsolete.

### *Cruises*

One quilting trip that is bigger and grander every year is the quilting cruise. Quilting cruises are created in conjunction with a cruise. These trips are set up at least a year in advance. I had the opportunity while working at a quilt shop during my undergraduate studies to work a quilting cruise traveling the East Coast and parts of Canada. A typical quilting cruise will have a classroom space rented within the cruise liner that is for the quilters only. Some quilting cruises supply machines, while others ask you to bring your own, unless it is specifically a hand quilting event. Quilters can also bring their own fabric for the projects they will be making, or they can purchase pre-cut kits that will be

on the cruise ship when they arrive. Up to 100 quilters will be on a cruise like this at a time. While the cruise is at sea, classes are held for the quilters to learn new techniques from the special guest teachers and create different projects. Quilters have unlimited access to the classrooms, and can spend the entire cruise quilting if they wish. While the ship is in port, quilters can sign up for the same events and tours as other cruise goers. In addition, the quilting shop or company in charge of the quilting aspect may also provide a list of quilt shops located near the port for the quilters to visit. Quilting cruises often visit places such as Hawaii, Alaska, the Caribbean, and the East Coast of the United States. However, a quilting cruise can take place on any cruise to any destination.

### *Festivals*

Within the quilting social world, there are specific festivals quilters feel they need to visit. Many of them have traveled to the International Quilt Festival in Houston, Texas. Sarah's first big trip for quilting was to the International Quilt Festival. "I really went with another friend on a Sunday after I had been at the Renaissance festival all day Saturday and we had nothing to do on Sunday and she knew I liked quilting. So we stopped by and we were only there for three hours but I knew after that that. One, I was coming back for more than three hours. And, two, I wasn't bringing a non-quilter with me next time!" Sarah enjoyed her trip to the festival, and she continues to go back every year. Now, she travels there with her friend Natalie and sometimes a third friend of theirs. Their claim to fame at the IQF is the fact that they dress up every year. Every day of the show, they dress up in a new costume that they have made. Sarah laughed as she recalled their trips, their craziest costumes, and how people react:

We love dressing up for the show. Unfortunately, there will only be two of us this year, but we will still be dressed up as usual! We have some crazy things this year. It's like, I look at Natalie and I'm like 'are you crazy? Are you sure we can pull this off?' and well apparently we are going to. It's going to be bigger and better than last year!

Many of the other quilters attended the International Quilt Festival at least once. The International Quilt Festival, also called IQF, is self-claimed as the largest quilting festival in the country, if not the world. The IQF recently celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary during the 2014 show, and claims to be the largest quilt show and market in the world, held every year during the first week of November (Talarico, 2014). The show is held in two parts, the Festival portion and the Market portion. The Market portion is only accessible by vendors and specific shop owners and not available to the public. The International Quilt Festival in its entirety is located in downtown Houston, Texas, and is held in the George R Brown Convention Center. The IQF is spread across three floors and encompasses Halls A through E of the building (Quilts, Inc., 2004). Due to the size of the show, it can be overwhelming, especially for a first-time festival goer. Lynn was "overwhelmed and overstimulated" by the number of quilts and vendors at the first IQF she went to, as were Sarah, Brenda, Pam, and Sherrie. They all mentioned how there were just so many quilts to look at, and so many vendor booths to shop at, that the show is impossible to do in one day. "It takes two full days to go through the vendors and day three we look at the show and buy any last minute items," Sarah said. "By day three, you are tired and pushing it to get the rest of it seen!"

Another festival that is highly traveled to in the quilting world and is a must see place is the Paducah Show in Paducah, Kentucky. Held every April and September, the AQS QuiltWeek Paducah Show takes over the town of Paducah, Kentucky. Paducah is a draw to quilters year-round due to the historic Quilt Museum located there, but the twice-yearly show is the main reason why quilters travel to Paducah. It is actually one of the few quilting festivals to repeat its show multiple times throughout the year with both a fall and spring show in Paducah.

Quilting festivals exist all across the country. Hundreds of quilting festivals and shows occur every year, from grand scale festivals like the IQF and Paducah to small single-day shows in small towns like Carthage, Texas. On any given day, there could be a quilting festival or show occurring. According to Festivals-and-Shows.com, there were over 346 shows in 2015 (2015). This number grows every year as more small shows are formed, and the potential to see a new quilting show every day of the year increases. These shows are as varied and unique as quilt shops, and there are shows for every type of quilter to attend, from large-scale shows with vast amounts of high tech machines and art quilts, to smaller, more humble shows that showcase local shops and talent. Sarah said it best when she stated, “quilt shows and festivals bring people together through the quilts, through the travel, and just by being there.”

One of the newest quilting attractions that quilters attend is not a festival or a shop per se. It is the Missouri Star Quilt Company in Hamilton, Missouri. What started out as a small quilting store has grown into one of the largest pre-cut fabric suppliers in the United States. It also takes up a considerable amount of the main square of Hamilton,

Missouri. The company now employs over 150 people, and has 5 storefronts on the main square. Due to its size and the fact the shop helped the town of Hamilton rise from a near ghost town to a thriving city, quilters come to visit from all over the world. Carrie wants to travel to see Missouri Star Quilt Co. because “it’s just amazing how [Jenny Doan’s] shop saved that town. It’s a whole town based on quilting, and it’s got to be the best thing ever.” To see a town that was saved from the brink of becoming a ghost town, and is now a thriving city because of one woman’s shop is a trip that quilters feel they must take. It reaffirms to them that quilting is important, that it is more than just a hobby. It can actually save a town. Also, Jenny Doan, the owner, is mentioned quite frequently to be, as Carrie stated, “a wonderful person, and she’s like everyone’s mom!” and quilters love to go visit with her. Around Jenny Doan, quilters feel like family, like they belong, which is a motivation for why these serious quilters travel.

### **Quilter Motivations**

Within a serious leisure activity, there comes a time when involvement drives the participant to travel. In quilting, this is prominent. My research revealed unique motivations for which quilters travel in the aforementioned ways. Some traveled for the novelty, some to reaffirm their quilting identity, and others to further the history of quilting by creating history.

#### *Reaffirming Their Quilting Identity - “You are a Quilter; so You are One of Us”*

One of the biggest reasons quilters travel is to reaffirm their quilting identity. It is a part of the quilter identity to have visited certain festivals and shops. Lynn said one of the places she has to travel to is the quilt festival in Paducah, Kentucky. “That’s one



place I need to go. It's like one of those places you have to go see as a quilter." Many other quilters said the same thing. There are places quilters have to travel to, and if they have not traveled to it yet, it creates more of a desire to go. The quilt festival and museum in Paducah, Kentucky are places a quilter needs to visit to be seen as part of the quilting social world.

Quilters also felt they must travel to the International Quilt Festival in Houston, Texas. Mary feels she has to go to the International Quilt Festival because "[it's] something every quilter has to do. It's like you are really a quilter if you've gone to the International Quilt Festival." The International Quilt Festival is held annually in Houston, Texas, and tens of thousands of quilters attend during the four-day festival. It is seen as a pillar of the quilting world, and every quilter has to go at least once to see what the festival had to offer. It is similar in fashion to how Mecca and Jerusalem are seen by religious travelers. During my interviews, every quilter either mentioned that quilters have to attend the festival, or that they need to attend because they have not been there yet. They also all asked me if I had attended, as if to make sure that I knew the importance of attending the festival. I have been many times, and stating that to informants seemed to add to my credibility as a quilter in their many of their eyes, and they opened up even more throughout our conversations.

The Missouri Star Quilt Company is a unique place quilters also feel the need to visit. The Missouri Star Quilt Company in Hamilton, Missouri is a town created from quilting. Mary wants to go there because "it's just amazing how [Jenny Doan's] shop saved that town. It's a whole town based on quilting, and it's got to be the best thing

ever!” The Missouri Star Quilt Company is a newer quilting landmark that quilters believe they must attend largely to see the impact and importance of quilting on this Missouri town.

*Adding Quilting to Other Trips - “It’s Just Something We Do!”*

All the informants travel for their quilting, but their main way of traveling was not to go to a festival or make a specific trip. Quilters do travel in those ways, but the most prominent way for quilters to travel for quilting was to join their quilting travels with another trip or vacation they are already taking. These quilters add in quilting destinations to any trip they make, whether they go on vacation, are going to a family reunion, or a convention. They sought out shops, festivals, museums, and other quilting-related places on the way to, from, or at their destinations. The main objective of their trip was not for quilting, but the quilters made quilting a major part of their trips and vacations.

Lynn even stated that it is not even a conscious decision for her and her family to add quilting to their other trips. When they create vacations, they rarely plan to stop at quilt shops, or even research in advance to find any. As they are on the trip, they simply look as they are walking or driving around. She stated:

I think it’s just natural, like when someone looks up a restaurant to eat at. It’s just natural for us to try to find the shops and festival and stores wherever we go. We just automatically Google it or just look while we are there. We don’t say ‘hey let’s look for quilt shops’ we just do. We find them while driving and we have to shop. Like ‘oh a yarn shop and a quilt shop let’s stop” and there’s no talking about it.

We just stop. I think it's just second nature now to look for it because that's what we like.

Lynn said she and her family members have even looked for quilt shops on their family vacations, even if they did not end up finding anything. "We look for quilting anywhere we go...like when we went to Guatemala last Christmas." She stated they would just look while they were out exploring the towns they were visiting in Guatemala. They did not search online or beforehand, but as they walked through markets and streets, they would see if anything looked like a quilt shop. "I was really hoping to find some beautiful fabrics and textiles and quilting," Lynn said when recollecting her trip. "There was a lot of needlework, beautiful needlework, but nothing that was truly quilting with the stack of fabric and batting. I was really hoping for some quilting that was unique to the area. Especially after seeing the ruins." While visiting some ruins at an abandoned sugar cane mill and at an old church, her family notice some designs within the carvings that mimicked popular traditional quilt pattern designs that are still prominent to this day. "We found several patterns that are very traditional quilt patterns that you still see being made today, like flying geese and pinwheels. It got me very excited because I so thought we were going to find some quilting made off of these patterns in a style we hadn't seen before," Lynn stated. But, even though there were some ruins that looked promising, they did not find any quilts. This failure to find quilts, however, does not stop Lynn and her family from looking for quilts and quilt shops wherever they go. It is part of their family travels.

Quilters are proud of the fact they are quilters and they identify strongly as quilters. There are different ways they show and seek their identity as a quilter who travels. Some quilters are drawn towards learning and preserving the history of quilting, others seek the diversity within quilting, and many strive to be an integral part of the quilting social world.

*Exploring the History of Quilting - "I Got into Quilting Because of the History"*

Quilting has a rich history which has evolved over the centuries. In the beginning, quilting was a necessary domestic activity, mainly pursued by women, where they would create simple quilts to keep their families warm and covered during the chilly months. As fabrics became more easily acquired, this mentality changed. Quilts became more elaborate, and made more for their beauty and less for necessity. In the years preceding and during the Civil War, quilts were used by those in the Underground Railroad. The patchwork designs on the quilts that were hanging on porches would signify if the house was safe for those escaping slavery to stay for a while, or if the house could potentially be raided due to suspicions. Quilting also has played major roles lately within the Feminist movements within the last five decades. To be a part of a craft so rich in history is an honor.

Many of the serious quilters I interviewed felt this pull towards the history of quilting. Many of them felt the need to preserve older ways of quilting, such as hand-piecing and -quilting, because of the history behind them. Angie sends her quilts to be hand-quilted because she loves the history and the way they look, and she can no longer hand-quilt herself. "I love having my quilts hand-quilted...and I send them to a lady and

she hand-quilts them for me and she does a beautiful job! It means a lot to me,” Angie stated. Brenda mainly quilts with antique quilt blocks and is traditional when she quilts because, like Dee, “it keeps the family history going” as well as keeping the art of hand-quilting from being lost.

Quilters enjoy seeing the changes in quilts over the decades, from the way the quilts were put together to the fabrics and patterns. Quilting museums like the Quilt Museum in La Grange, Texas. Sara and her friends frequently stop at this museum because of the quilt exhibits and the fact they rotate out the quilts every four months: “We stop there every time now because it would always be different...there are always quilts to look at that we haven’t seen.” She travels through La Grange with her friends several times a year, and it is convenient for them to stop at the museum and attached quilt shop. The Quilt Museum in La Grange is one of many quilt museums quilters can visit, so is the Paducah Quilt Museum.

This pull to be involved in quilting because of the history does not stop at just participating in quilting. Many felt the need to travel to historic quilting towns to really become immersed in the history of quilting. Dee said,

I’ve been to the Amish country and the quilts there are just beautiful. I love traveling there to see the quilts there. I have even seen a huge quilt store there. It was a neat experience, because there was no electric lights! But the fabrics and quilts were beautiful.

It was a great experience for her to see a different yet historic side of quilting. She was not the only one who feels the need to travel and see historical quilts and quilting styles.

Amish quilting festivals and shows are prominent for this reason, as the Amish culture continues to this day to make traditional, hand stitched quilts.

The need to travel to other countries to see the history of quilting also exists. Dee added in a palace trip in while she was in Russia and was able to see the history of the quilts because she “wanted to see the history there, and the heritage of quilting there.” She loved to attend museums wherever she goes, especially if there is a quilting exhibit, and even more so if she is in another country: “The heritage is so different than what we see in quilt museums here in the States.... We have such a short history, and sometimes you can find historical quilts that are hundreds of years old [in other countries]!” Visiting museums to see the history of quilts, even those within other countries, is a common trip for quilters.

Many quilters also felt that by being involved in quilting, and traveling for quilting, they were a part of quilting history. Lynn has a collection of quilts from various family members, from great-great-grandmothers to her daughters, nieces, and nephews hanging on her walls within her home: “I love the living history that I have.... I have old quilts made by members of both sides of the family.... I also have a wall of quilts that were made by my daughters and my nieces and nephews.” She loves her walls of quilts, and she decorates her home with these quilts made by her family members. One thing she loves the most about them is the fact that quilting is the one commonality between her past and current family members.” “Each [quilt] is made by someone in my family.... [Quilting] is the only thing they all have in common, and the one thing that brings us all together...it’s our family history.” Quilting can be a family tradition that

spurs them to travel, especially with people such as Lynn, and is ingrained within their quilting identity.

*Experiencing Quilting Types Across Cultures - “Getting a Taste of Different Quilting Styles”*

Lynn had two family trips where they added in searching for quilt stores to satiate their curiosity of how quilting styles and fabrics were different across cultures. When they were in Hawaii, Lynn said they “even got to see a lady working on a quilt one time when [they] passed through” and it was “really neat” because “they had a whole different style of quilting” in Hawaii. She said,

The patterns, the fabric, the style, everything as different as what we see in Texas....We were also able to find some fabrics in the market, but it would have been fun to go to a textile factory and a shop or two.

She was fascinated by the style she had never seen before, but she had wanted to see more of it, whether in the form of a textile factory or a quilt store. She was disappointed that even though there were quilt patterns within the carvings on the ruins, there were no quilts within Guatemala. She felt the same disappointment during her trip to Hawaii, when she realized they were on the island that did not have quilting or quilt shops:

It was nice getting a taste of the different style. We were on the wrong island [in Hawaii] and we didn’t get to make it to the shops....When we went to Guatemala I was expecting the same thing, but it doesn’t exist there. I was disappointed that I couldn’t find any quilting, especially after we had found some ruins that had

stonework etched into the pieces of the buildings that are very traditional quilt patterns that you still see being made today, like flying geese and pinwheels. It would have been very cool to see.

Dee also goes to other countries to see their quilts, but she prefers the historical side, and is less interested in the current quilt trends in other countries. Sarah has also traveled to other countries to see their quilts and fabrics. She went on a trip to Zambia, Africa with Natalie and was able to buy some unique and beautiful batik fabrics while she was there. “[The fabric] was more freeform across the entire length of the fabric...so much different than what we see in America,” Sarah stated. She had hoped to see how the fabric was made, but the textile factory was closed by the time they arrived. The attraction of seeing quilts and fabrics made in other countries and cultures is a reason that quilters travel. They were interested in seeing the different types of quilting prevalent in other cultures, especially those different from their own, and the need to travel to experience these styles led them to want to see how their serious leisure activity is done in other cultures and countries.

#### *Creating Family History - “Family History in the Making”*

To many of the quilters, quilting has been a part of their family life for a long time. They either quilted with their older relatives, their children, or even their grandchildren. Sometimes they have learned to quilt from their family, or taught them to quilt themselves. By making quilting a family leisure activity, they grew together as a family, and even traveled together in pursuit of quilting. Quilting historically was passed down from family member to family member, and is still passed down like this



nowadays. Now, not only are they passing down quilting techniques, but also the concept of traveling for their quilting.

Brenda continued the quilting legacy in her family, even though at first she had said “[she] never knew [her] grandmother quilted” until she inherited some of her old quilts, but the first thing she did after that was “[get] some material and...there was 20 blocks that were all the Flower Garden design...in 5 different colors” and she stitched them together and finished the quilts her grandmother started. She followed the traditional pattern and fabrics, and even pieced them by hand. These finished quilts have been given to other family members, and one is hanging in her sewing room to remind her of her grandmother.

Mary started quilting after being inspired by quilts her grandmother had made. She had always admired the handiwork of the quilts, and she inherited those quilts when her mother passed away. But before inheriting those quilts, Mary learned to quilt. “I was so inspired by these that I decide I wanted to learn to quilt, but I did that before my mom passed. We actually learned together!” Quilting was the hobby she and her mom started together, and was the craft they did together and traveled for as a family. She continued quilting even after her mom had passed, and now quilts with her best friend.

To Pam, it was important to her to have a craft where she worked with her hands: “My mother, I always said, she taught me the joy of working with my hands and producing things that I liked to make and do and that I thought were, well not beautiful but useful.” Quilting does that for her, and goes along with family values she was taught as a child.

She learned to quilt to keep these family values and morals alive, and her quilting travels perpetuate those values and morals as well.

Keeping quilting within the family is also a reason quilters get into their craft, and a reason why they travel. It is “family history in the making”, as Lynn put it. Lynn loves to see the quilts her daughters, nieces, and nephews make to put up on her flag wall. “[Y]ou can tell they were all made for the wall but the personalities of each kid shows through as well.” She loves the art that is shown on her walls through the personalities and design choices of her daughters, nieces, and nephews. Since these quilts were created over the course of two decades, and many of the kids made multiple quilts, the wall showcases the progress and changes in design style of the family members. “My youngest has three on the wall. One from when she was 7, one at around 12, the other at 17,” Lynn said. “So that’s 10 years of her sewing and quilting and changing, and it’s documented right here on my wall.” Lynn’s family frequently travels together for their quilting, creating their own retreats, shop hops, and even heading to the International Quilt Festival together.

*The Adventure of Something New - “It’s the Adventure of What I Might Find”*

One reason quilters travel is for novelty and adventure. The quilters were seeking a new fabric, a new project, or various other items that sparked their interest. New experiences they were seeking could be to attend a new festival or quilt shop, finding a new gadget, fabric or even a new pattern. For many quilters, this novelty they were seeking was adventure and inspiration.

Dee loves to go to a new shop because “you never know what you are going to find... A new shop may have something I need! I won’t know what it is until I see it!” She loves the thrill of entering a new shop and finding something she believes she needs to have. One of those items she looks for is the fabric she collects. “I collect blue fabric, and I try to get a piece of blue fabric everywhere I go,” Dee said. “I want to be inspired. I want a piece of fabric or a pattern to grab me and tell me to take it home,” and that is why she loved traveling to new stores. She was looking for inspiration, and a new piece of blue fabric to take home with her. Mary also goes to new shops and quilting places she has never been because “you never know what you can find. It could be something you never thought you needed or wanted, but it’s calling to you.” Both of these quilters love going into new shops and festivals because they can find something there that they need. They may not know they need it when they arrive at the shop or festival, but that does not mean they will not find an item they want to buy.

Finding new items also helped these quilters continue to hone their skills. Without the ability to travel, these quilters would not be able to learn as many new techniques. The constant learning and skill building is a part of this serious leisure activity, and travel makes it possible. Sarah learned many different quilting styles on her various trips, including those she now knows she would never do again. “It was fun to learn, but I would never applique like that again!” she stated many times. Sherrie also travels to hone her skills as she “loves to learn new things, no matter what they are”. The travels of quilters also help them learn about different types of quilts, and can distinguish between quilts made in different eras because of it. Lynn has two quilts made by

relatives, one in the 1920s and the other in the 1940s, and she can tell when they were made because of the fabrics, patterns, and the construction of the quilt. Brenda also said “you can definitely tell a 1930s quilt from anything else” because she reconstructs many antique quilts for people, and loves to work with 1930s style quilts.

Mary thought of her travel for quilting as an adventure. “I love the adventure of going out and seeing something new. It’s the adventure of what I might find.... It’s not just about the shops. But about seeing the towns, seeing the landscapes. The adventure of it all.” Her quilting travels have brought her to new towns she never thought she would visit:

Sometimes the shops are in the middle of nowhere, and you would have never gone there unless there was a shop because you are literally in the middle of fields! But it could be one of the coolest shops you have ever seen. And it’s fun to see new landscapes and new cities. It can be absolutely gorgeous and I love it.

*Autonomy and Freedom - “There Is Freedom in Doing What You Want”*

Another common factor through these quilters was their need to travel for quilting as a source of autonomy and freedom. This type of freedom is freedom from responsibilities, and the freedom to create whatever they wanted. This gives them an autonomy over their lives, and the ability to have fun, be happy, and not feel guilty about it since they are doing something they love. Melissa stated,

I never thought I would be a quilter when I was younger! I wasn’t even thinking about quilting, but I can do what I want to do. I don’t have any kids to worry about, or a husband to worry about. I can do whatever I want.”

She said she enjoys this freedom to do what she wants in her life, and loves that she can spend her time experiencing this freedom through her quilting.

Mary also feels freedom from her quilting and travel because “we do what we need to do what we want. Quilting is no exception. There is freedom in doing what you want, especially when you can be creative at the same time.” Carrie also felt this freedom after her kids left for college. She and Mary quilt together on the weekends, and they experience the freedom of creating what they want, when they want, together.

*Find Inspiration - “People are So Creative and You can See Their Creativity and Be Inspired”*

Inspiration from shops can come in many forms. The shops themselves can feel like a special place for the quilters to relax and be themselves, which can help them find inspiration. Brenda stated she “[loves] the opportunity to see new material and patterns” at new shops because she has a “very traditional taste.” At these new shops, she can find new styles that expand her world into “someplace [she] would never have picked to make.” Brenda said she was lucky she has never run into any staff that was not kind to her, because she “love[s] talking with the staff because they understand and love the same stuff [she does] and they are also happy to just talk quilting.” Since they are so kind to her, and she loves being in new shops, she always makes sure to buy something from every shop she visits. Her favorite thing about going into a shop is how much the staff understands her, even when they have never met. She noted, “They also don't seem to mind that I say, I am taking a break from driving on a trip and will let me look as long as I want....there is a tranquil feeling there.”

Mary loves going into new shops because “there is so much inspiration in shops with all the quilts that are hanging. People are so creative, and you can see their creativity and be inspired.” She is not the only one. Several informants stressed that they visit new shops to be inspired. Inspiration is what draws quilters in when they visit a new shop, festival, or any other quilting event. They want to be inspired so they can go back home and “create beautiful things”, as Sherrie stated she does when she travels.

Although Natalie said she is “picky” about the shops she likes, she wants “be inspired by many different colors and patterns.” She stated, “I don’t want to feel overwhelmed by clutter, it doesn’t make me unhappy per se, but I do want it to be easy to look around in. Variety is key, new fabrics are key. And I want to be inspired.” Natalie really likes when the shops she visits have quilts hanging because, “They inspire people, they show them how things will look and can help people create their own beautiful items.” Inspiration is key when it comes to quilting, and especially when finding a quilt store one likes. Many informants stated that if they did not feel inspired by something, or if something did not draw them into the store, they would leave and seek inspiration elsewhere.

*Sense of Belonging - “You’re all Quilters and That’s the Only Thing That Matters”*

Another theme that was present throughout the interviews with the serious quilters was the sense of belonging they felt when traveling with other quilters or being at quilt festivals or shops. It has not always been like that though. Lynn said “the quilting world has evolved and it gives you that opportunity to learn new things from people and be inspired by people...you’re all quilters and that’s the only thing that matters. You

meet people from all over the world, and you're instantly friends because you are quilters." When traveling to the International Quilt festival, Lynn felt it was even more apparent:

Every booth you go to, from the shop owners to the people shopping, you walk in there and you automatically feel like you have friends. You don't know their names, you don't know anything about them, and other than the fact you share the same hobby. Everyone is helping everyone pick out fabric and everybody is going 'Oh I bought that notion or contraption two years ago let me tell you how awesome it is' and you can trust what they say. It's kind of a cool experience.... Plus you get to be in a space with 50 to 60 thousand people who share the same hobbies and passions as you do.

Brenda felt that going into a shop was "a special time because they are quiet places even if a class is going on in another part of the store." Quilt shops are seen as a safe haven for quilters because of this feeling of belonging. At quilt shops, a quilter can just roam through the store, and everyone there will understand why they are there. No one will judge them, because every quilter understands the need to be around the fabric and be inspired.

Sherrie loves being a quilter because there is a sense of belonging that comes with being a quilter: "Quilters all come from different backgrounds, and have wonderful stories to share. And quilting brings us together. That's the common thread among us all, the quilting." This was a common sentiment among quilters. Sherrie also said she loves the visiting and the social aspect of quilting and taking quilting classes because "we're

all there for quilting and to chat with one another, and it's a really nice atmosphere. Everyone there is a quilter, we all identify as that, and we all bond over that fact.” Quilters bond over their identities as quilters, that they all have a shared, similar interest. Even with things as simple as understanding the fabric stashes they all hide, or the unfinished projects they have. “That’s part of quilting.” Sherrie said. “We all have items we’ll never finish, and stashes we’ll never complete. And that’s another great thing about talking with other quilters. We all get that need to collect fabric and patterns, and don’t call each other crazy for it.” It is how quilters bond. They are all quilters, and that is what brings them together and gives them the feeling like they belong within this social world.

### **Summary**

My research ascertained the seriousness of quilters and why they are serious quilters. I also found various venues and types of trips quilters take, such as retreats, road trips, shop hops, bus tours, and festivals, to further their seriousness with quilting. Motivations for these serious quilters to travel to quilting destinations were also established. These motivations included *reaffirming their quilter identity, learning about the quilting from different cultures, seeking inspiration, the adventure of novelty seeking, creating new family history while preserving ancestral history*, and a *sense of belonging* when they are around other quilters. They also add quilting destinations and venues into family vacations and other trips because their identity is tied so closely with quilting.



## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS

#### **Discussion**

This study was conducted to shed light on why quilters travel for their serious leisure. Within this study, I interviewed 10 serious quilters across the country to ascertain why they felt the drive to travel to festivals, quilt shops, and attend trips like bus tours, shop hops, and quilting cruises. Quilting itself has been studied (Dickie, 2011; King, 2001; Peirce & Cheek, 2004; Pöllänen, 2013; Stalp, 2006; Stalp & Winge, 2008; Stalp & Conti, 2009) and as serious leisure (Ditton, Loomis, & Choi, 1992; Gahwiler and Havitz, 1998; Scott & Thigpen, 2003, Shibutani, 1955; Stebbins, 1979, 1996, 2005; Unruh, 1979, 1980) and tourism motivations (Backman et al., 1995; Crompton, 1979; Crompton & McKay, 1997; Getz, 1991, 1993, 2010; Iso-Ahola, 1982; Lee, Lee, & Wicks, 2003; Nicholson & Pearce, 2001; Park, Reisinger & Kang, 2008; Scott, 1996; Woosnam, McElroy, & Van Winkle, 2009; Yolal, Çetinal, & Uysal, 2009 ), but quilting as a form of serious leisure had not been considered prior to this research. My research will help bridge the gap between these fields of study (i.e., quilting, serious leisure, travel, and tourism motivations) and lay the groundwork for more studies to be conducted that incorporates these topics.

Quilters were both consumer and producer tourists, as they both consume and create items where they traveled (Everett, 2012; Tan, Luh, & Kung, 2014). They are different from those that travel for other activities such as music festivals, or just enjoy the act of traveling (Ek et al, 2008). Through this research, I sought to explore the

various reasons why quilters travel, since they do not travel for their leisure activity like other who do the same for their respective leisure activity. Crompton (1979), Mohr et al (1993), Murray (1964), Nicholson & Pearce (2001), Park, Reisinger, & Kang (2008), Scott (1996), and Uysal, Gahan, & Martin (1993) all studied different ways individuals travel and attend festivals, but they did not examine motives of serious participants.

Travel can be a large part of a serious leisure activity, especially when the participant becomes even more serious about their activity. The desire to further their seriousness can be satiated in the form of various kinds of travel, as seen with quilting. This type of travel, to further the seriousness of involvement within a leisure activity, is not commonly studied. Authors like Petrick et al (2001) considered how golfers are motivated to travel to different golf courses and can be studied through experience use history. This is similar to what motivated quilters to travel. There are other leisure activities where people travel to further their seriousness. Scott and Thigpen (2003) showed that birders are tourists because of the way in which they travel to see birds. Birders and quilters are not so different. These two activities coincide because of the seriousness of the activity, and the ways in which the participants travel. These activities could be used to bridge the gap between serious leisure and travel, and showcase the styles in which serious leisure participants travel.

Quilters traveled for a variety of reasons, from keeping family history alive to exploring identity and novelty seeking behaviors. This is similar to motivations behind why people travel to other venues (Backman et al., 1995; Crompton, 1979; Crompton & McKay, 1997; Iso-Ahola, 1982; Lee, Lee, & Wicks, 2003; Park, Reisinger & Kang,

2008; Woosnam, McElroy, & Van Winkle, 2009; Yolal, Çetinal, & Uysal, 2009), although, the reasons quilters traveled transcends these motivations. Quilters are not typical travelers, as they do not just consume where they travel (Everett, 2012). In many occasions, they produced items as well when they quilt during cruises, on bus tours, and at retreats (Everett, 2012). Their motivations are similar, but not the same as other travelers. The need for these quilters to travel is deeply ingrained within their social identity. Identity theory shows identity-seeking behaviors can become an integral part of a person, because finding and keeping their self-identity is important, especially within strong groups like social worlds (Ashford & Mael 1989; Bain 2005; Beech, et al, 2016; Elsbach 2009; Ezzy 1998; Hoedemaekers & Ybema, 2015; Jenkins, 1996; Kreiner, Hollensbe & Sheep, 2006; Lee & Lin, 2011; McFarland & Pals, 2005; Tan, Luh, & King 2014; Watson, 2008). They said they have to travel to properly feel like they are a part of the quilting social world. Quilters largely traveled for identity-seeking purposes, such as to either reaffirm their identity to themselves and other quilters and to preserve and create family history like how Lynn, Brenda, and Sherrie use their quilting.

Through this study, several key motivations as to why serious quilters travel were identified, as well as several travel venues. Quilters attend trips like shop hops, road trips, and quilting cruises, which can all be sponsored by shops or created by the individual quilters. Quilting festivals are held throughout the year, and although there are hundreds of shows, there are landmark ones that all quilters feel they must attend, like the International Quilt Festival in Houston, Texas and the AQS QuiltWeek Show and

Museum in Paducah, Kentucky. The main motivations as to why quilters travel to these events were linked to identity seeking and novelty seeking.

Quilters identify heavily with their craft. They defined themselves as quilters. Like serious birders, toy car designers, and gamers, their identity is formed through their leisure activity (Elsbach 2009; Lee & Lin, 2011; Scott & Godbey, 1992; Scott & Thigpen, 2003). They introduce themselves as quilters, and hold that title proudly. All of the quilters I interviewed repeatedly stated that they were quilters, and they would go on trips and collect their stashes of fabrics because they were quilters. Stebbins (1979, 1996, 2005) stated that this type of insistence of identity is the sixth characteristic of a serious leisure participant, wherein the other five characteristics are solidified within the participant and they strongly identify with their leisure activity. It did not matter when they started quilting, or where they came from, as long as they were enjoying the creative process of quilting, they were quilters. They prove their identity as serious quilters by traveling to the landmark festivals that are important to the social world, such as the International Quilt Festival and to Paducah. If they have not been to these events, they stressed how they must go because that is where quilters go, as those are the festivals that quilters attend. And they are quilters, so they too must attend the festivals. This coincides with the levels of commitment posed by Gahwiler and Havitz (1998), where the more involved a participant was within their social world, the more committed and loyal they would be to the social world and related businesses. This helps explain why quilters need to travel to certain festivals, shows, and shops. The four different types of involvement within social worlds explained by Unruh (1980) are also shown

within these quilters' identities. The quilters I interviewed fall within the *regular* and the *insider* categories. *Regulars* are highly committed and involved, and are the typical serious participant, and *insiders* are even more committed and are deeply ingrained into the social world (Unruh, 1980), like many of the quilters in this study.

Quilters travel to explore the history of quilting. These travels could take them across the country, or even across the world. The history of quilting is long, and the subtle changes throughout the centuries have led this domestic, utilitarian craft to the artistic form of serious leisure that it is today. Because of this, quilters also realize they are a part of the quilting history, and many of them chose their particular quilting habits to both honor the history of traditional quilting and make sure it is not lost. They also travel to seek out this history in places where traditional forms of history are found, like in museums, or where they are still being practiced.

Serious quilters travel to continue their own family history as well. Many quilters come from a long line of quilters, and there is a need to keep this family tradition going. Some of the informants had already passed their quilting knowledge down to their daughters, nieces, and even nephews, making the art of quilting part of their family history. They further engrained quilting into their family lives by going on quilting trips together, like attending classes or going to festivals together, or even creating a family retreat where they can all work on projects together.

Quilters also traveled the world to see different quilting styles than they are used to seeing in their daily lives. Some of these quilters had traveled to Hawaii, Russia, and even Africa to and made sure to visit any quilting museums and shops to identify the

differences in fabrics, patterns and quilting techniques. To see quilts that are constructed in ways that they have never seen before is inspiring, and shows that cultural differences can also change how a craft is different from one culture to the next. Even if the place they visited does not have a strong quilting presence, it is a sign that still shows the differences in quilting across cultures.

An interesting commonality I found among the serious quilters was the way they traveled. For the most part, they did not specifically take trips for only quilting. Instead, they routinely add treks to quilt shops and festivals into their other trips, whether those trips are vacations to South American countries, mission trips to Africa, or a road trip to a family reunion. Quilting is so engrained within their lives and into their identities that they cannot travel anywhere without visiting quilt stores and festivals while on their other travels.

Quilters were also highly motivated by novelty seeking. Quilters traveled for the adventure and possibility of the new items they can find, and this pull factor draws them to various quilter destinations (Crompton & McKay, 1997; Iso-Ahola, 1982). They travel to new shops, festivals, and go on shop hops and cruises to find something new that they have not seen before. This could be a new fabric, a new pattern, some high tech quilting gadget or notion to make quilting easier, or it could be a new destination. It does not matter which it is for; quilters travel for the novelty of the new item they have found. They sought to find something new and to have the ability to enjoy it (Dann, 1981).

On a related note, quilters also traveled to new shops and festivals to be inspired. This is another pull factor which brings quilters to new destinations (Crompton &

McKay, 1997; Iso-Ahola, 1982). Inspiration fuels creativity, and many informants stated that they need the inspiration to create their own works of art. Being inspired by someone else's creations, a new pattern, or a pretty piece of fabric was a motivation behind why quilters need to travel. They said they could not always find this inspiration in their sewing rooms, or at their local quilt shops because they were used to seeing everything within them. They need something new to stir up their creative juices and create beautiful quilts, and they will travel until they find it and make it part of their stash (Stalp & Winge, 2008).

Quilters also loved to travel to new shops and festivals because of the feeling of belonging they get when they enter a shop or festival. Everyone there is a quilter, or respects the art of quilting, so they all understand each other (Burt & Atkinson, 2011). No one judges anyone for their need to go into a store just to look at and pet the pretty fabric, or when they buy entire bolts of fabric, because they all do that. Every quilter understood what it is like to be a quilter, and they all felt like they belong. Having that feeling where everyone completely understands them is another reason why quilters will travel across the country. It does not matter where they go, if they are around other quilters, they will automatically feel like they belong and that they are part of a big quilting family and the quilting social world (Gawhiler & Havitz, 1998).

Prior to the undertaking of this study, the information about serious quilters was almost non-existent. Few scholars and authors have studied and written about quilting, and fewer still have written about serious quilters (Stalp, 2006, Stalp & Conti, 2009). The little knowledge on serious quilters that has been written about only shows that

serious quilters exist. These serious quilters have been shown to strive to negotiate space within their homes to pursue their craft because their craft was not taken seriously by family and friends (Stalp, 2006, Stalp & Conti, 2009). The quilting stereotype within society was deep, and only saw quilters as partaking in an unnecessary hobby, or as retired women who needed a hobby to occupy themselves during the day since they were no longer working (Pöllänen, 2013).

In the study I conducted, it was found that serious quilters were more than just the stereotypical older woman stitching in a circle with her quilting bee (Stalp, 2006). These quilters came from a variety of backgrounds, some even being much younger than the stereotypical age of quilters. Most found quilting in times of stress, the promise of a new child, or they were taught by their elders to quilt and they have kept the tradition. Most of the informants had been quilting for many years, and were not yet retired from their day job. They did not view quilting as just a hobby; quilting was a second job to them, a fun job they loved and it let them escape from reality when they needed. Many had also stopped caring whether non-quilters thought they were crazy for their hobby. Other quilters accepted them, and that was all that mattered.

Not only do quilters go beyond the typical stereotype (elderly, retired Caucasian women who gather with friends in a circle to create blankets (Piercy & Cheek, 2004)), they traveled throughout the country and world to pursue their craft. They travel to festivals, quilting museums, and shops. They attended quilting cruises, shop hops, and even create their own road trips to share their adventures with their friends and family members. These serious quilters do not just sit in their sewing bees and quilt the day



away anymore. They traveled, they visited quilting destinations and landmarks, and they did so in groups. Sometimes they created a group and then travel, either sponsored by a shop or not, and other times they would meet other quilters at a destination, like a festival, and go on trips with those they met later on, as shown by the serious quilters I interviewed.

The serious quilter strove to find new items and destinations to travel. They attended shop hops to find quilt shops they have never been to, because those shops could have inspiring fabrics and quilts hung on the wall. Serious quilters looked for that inspiring moment that sends them back to their sewing room to start quilting again. That moment may be a pretty quilt on the wall, an unusual piece of fabric, a new pattern, or a technique they learned from a friend or a teacher.

Although they looked for items that are new, serious quilters also have a deep respect for the traditional quilts and quilting. They traveled to quilting museums across the country to see firsthand the quilts from different ages. If a quilter was lucky enough to own a quilt from a family member, especially if those quilts are close to 100 years old, they showed it off to their friends, at their local quilt shops, and even show pictures of it to quilters they meet on their travels. Having this love and respect for the heritage and history of quilts brings them together, because they all shared those feelings. This ties in with the feeling of belonging that is part of a social world (Ditton, Loomis, & Choi, 1992; Scott & Godbey, 1992; Shibutani, 1955; Unruh, 1979; 1980) and leads to further involvement and loyalty within the social world and related businesses (Gahwiler & Havitz, 1998).

Traveling for quilting helped these quilters feel like they belong to the quilting social world even more than in the past. Traditionally, quilters would join local bees and guilds to quilt with and that was their social world. Now, with the rise of technology, these social worlds have expanded. Traveling is easier with apps and websites, and they were able to book quilting cruises and bus tours through a shop they have never visited in person. Once on the trip, they met new quilters and can were able to keep in touch through social media, expanding their quilter circle. Quilters can also met other quilters online, or met them through mutual friends, and even traveled with them. The quilters sought these connections with other quilters through their travels. Many of the quilters belonged to quilting groups, but there was a missing connection within those groups that led them to either leave the group, or travel outside the group.

Quilting also brings these quilters together, even though quilting is a more individualistic activity. Quilts are made individually, but some will come together in bees or guilds and work on their individual projects around others who are also working on individual projects. Some of the quilters I interviewed did this within their guilds, or even when quilting with their friends. However, within these groups there was also an inclination to gossip and talk among each other, which could be either a positive or negative depending on the person. Some quilters found the conversations to be wonderful, and considered them to be a source of socialization. Others, though, found it distracting, and may have also led to their desire to travel and find other people who wanted to just work on their individual projects together and not talk.

Many of the participants also loved to learn new techniques while they travel. They expressed a desire to attend classes and learn from prominent teachers on their trips, especially when taking a quilting cruise. Interestingly enough, it was not always the destination of the cruise that makes the serious quilter want to take it, but the teachers on the cruise and the projects they taught. The destination of the cruise is an added bonus for some. For others, going to a place they have never been is equally as important as the projects and teachers. Many of them also brought their travels back into their quilting, by either purchasing fabrics from the places they went and making them into quilts, or making quilts on the trips that corresponded with the trip itself.

Through this type of travel for serious leisure, another characteristic of serious leisure participants in addition to Stebbins' six characteristics may be found. The ways in which these quilters travel extends beyond just wanting to travel for their activity: it is a desire. These quilters felt the need to travel to different festivals, shops, shows, and use different types of travel because it was necessary to further their seriousness. This intense desire to travel may be a seventh characteristic of serious leisure participants, and needs to be looked at further.

### **Practical Implications**

The way quilters chose to travel now shows just how engrained quilting is within the lives of the quilters. Not only did they plan expensive and long trips like quilting cruises, bus tours, and shop hops, but they also added in quilting destination on their other trips. They even found time to quilt during family vacations, road trips, and reunions. On the way there, back home, and even at the destination, quilters sought out

quilting stores, festivals, and anything else they can find that is quilting-related.

Knowing that quilters travel this way can open the doors to changing the way quilting travel companies advertise. Since quilters travel to destinations first, then find quilting stores, this information can be used to create new types of quilting businesses and guidebooks to help quilters find quilt stores and museums during their trips. Even an app for a smart phone would be applicable, since social media has become more popular with quilters.

It is important to be aware of the habits and travel patterns of serious quilters. Companies like Country Heritage Tours create bus tours for quilters, and have for 30 years. They study the patterns of where quilters have been, and where they would like to travel. If companies like this knew the reasons why serious quilters travel, they could create even better trips for quilters, and bring even more quilters to destinations. As long as these destinations and trips are new, and quilters can find inspiration at the shops on the trips, or the festivals they attend there, any destination can be a potential trip for a serious quilter.

As stated earlier, the way these quilters combine their serious leisure with travel is not a new phenomenon, as other activities like birdwatching do the same thing, but it is not studied as such. It is studied as either travel or serious leisure (King, 2001; Peircy & Cheek, 2004; Stalp, 2006; Stalp & Conti, 2009; Stalp & Winge, 2008), when it is in fact both. The implications this study could have for both serious leisure and tourism fields involve combining two fields that are seen as separate, bridging the gap between leisure and travel, and creating an opening for further research within this sector of

tourism and serious leisure. These implications can be anything from how serious leisure participants travel to the ways in which they travel, how serious they are about their activity to how they show their level of seriousness. These types of studies have not been done in regards to serious leisure and travel, and would be another way to show how these two fields work together.

It is known that people travel, and they have serious leisure activities, but this could lead to finding the reasons behind why serious leisure participants feel the need to travel. This can also lead to ascertaining the differences are between serious travel and regular travel. Also, this can showcase the variation of seriousness within those participants depending on the types of travel and the amount of traveling they participate in for their leisure activity. All of these could be used to bring more information about serious travelers to light, and led to further studies on serious leisure activities and the way participants travel to increase their seriousness within those activities.

### **Limitations**

Like all research, this work has limitations. Although I was able to interview a variety of quilters, from different backgrounds, two different states, and even different ages for a representative sample, I was unable to interview any male quilters, or any quilters under the age of 30. Both of these quilter groups are becoming more visible, and I would have liked to have had the opportunity interview quilters from these groups to this study. I also would have liked to have seen a greater racial and ethnic diversity within the informants, or at least to have had additional quilters from these groups. The majority of quilters is still Caucasian women between the ages of 50-80 (Stalp, 2006;

Stalp, 2009; Stalp & Conti, 2008), so the sample I interviewed fit this demographic. However, the demographics of quilters are changing. Quilters of other races, younger quilters, and even male quilters are becoming more prevalent (ManQuilters, 2012). It would not have been representative of the population to have the entire sample be from these quilting minority groups, but a few additional informants from these groups, or even larger study that would have encompassed these groups, would have made for an even better representation of modern day quilters.

Another limitation is that I only looked at serious quilters within this study, and not casual quilters, due to the subject matter of this study. I was specifically looking at quilters who were serious about their quilting and travels, and although there was a slight variation in seriousness between these quilters, they were all serious quilters. While it is possible that casual quilters (i.e. those who quilt less often, one to two times a month, because of either lack of desire to quilt more or time constraints) also travel, their level of seriousness towards quilting is lower than needed for this project. The differences between casual and serious quilters would have showcased the levels of seriousness between the casual and the more serious quilters in a different light.

Another limitation is that although the informants came from different parts of the United States, I only had a few states actually represented. These were Texas, California, and Virginia. Quilters come from every state, and although I did have a variety of backgrounds from the informants, having quilters from other parts of the United States would have been an even better representation of the modern U.S. serious

quilter. A future study that encompasses representation from more states would be beneficial for continuing this study, or for future studies regarding serious quilters.

Another limitation is that very little research has been conducted concerning serious leisure and travel. We know it happens, through research also conducted on birdwatchers by Scott and Thigpen (2003), but little other research has been done. The tradition to fragment this type of travel, splitting it into either solely tourism or only serious leisure created a limitation for current research into the phenomena (King, 2001; Peirce & Cheek, 2004; Stalp, 2006; Stalp & Conti, 2009; Stalp & Winge, 2008). Because these studies looked at separately, the connections between travel and serious leisure are often overlooked. To have been able to bring more research from other serious leisure activities that travel on this scale would have greatly benefitted this study. To have had a study of another type of serious travel to refer back to and compare with, such as serious knitting, birdwatching, or any other activity studied not just for its seriousness, but for the need to travel to increase the level of seriousness within that activity, could have led to further insights into the travel motivations of serious participants. Studies conducted in the future to give these insights would be beneficial to others who would study this phenomena in the future.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

For future research, having more informants and potentially finding those who fit within the minority quilter groups could provide an even better representation of modern day quilters. Interviewing more quilters, from different regions of the United States, would potentially create a more accurate image of the modern serious quilter by studying

serious quilters from different races, gender, sexual orientation, economic status, and other demographic measures. By including these different demographics of quilters, a future study could show the differences between how the typical quilter travels, like those I interviewed, and those who are more diverse. Studying male serious quilter motivations would benefit academia due to the rise in male quilters over the last decade (ManQuilters.com, 2012).

With more informants from different regions of the United States, it might even be possible to pinpoint if certain types of trips are more common within a specific region, or if one of the types of travel is not as common among the quilters of a region as well. This information could further show the travel patterns of serious quilters throughout the United States by region. This would be beneficial to travel companies, quilting travel companies, and the companies that create the itineraries for quilting trips. It would also be beneficial to possibly work with one of those companies that plans quilt tours and trips to see how the travel trends for quilters have changed over the years.

It would also be beneficial to combine this research on serious quilters and how they travel with other serious leisure activities that travel in the same manner. Birdwatching is another such activity (Scott & Thigpen, 2003). By studying how activities like these travel similarly and differently, and showcasing the overlaps in how serious they are, could lead to the combining of aspects of the tourism and serious leisure fields. People travel for various reasons, but when they travel for serious leisure, they are either studied as tourists separate from their leisure activity, or leisure participants separate from their travel. The two do not need to be separated. The more



serious a participant is in regards to their leisure activity, the more likely they will desire to travel for the activity. This is shown through quilters and birders, and potentially even more serious leisure activities that have not been studied yet in this way. To know why and how serious leisure participants travel for their activity would be beneficial both for serious leisure and tourism entities, as they would be able to predict travel, and even provide better ways or even facilities, festivals, and other events the leisure activity could use.

Future research can also be to take this study a step further, utilizing data from more serious quilters from across the United States. The serious quilters I interviewed often added quilting into their vacations and trips, and did not just specifically travel for quilting itself. To be able to create a better database, or even an application for a smart phone that is like the Quilter's Companion (a book of quilt shops that is released every two years) but is up-to-date and also has locations and information on local shows, festivals, and even high profile quilting teachers would be helpful to serious quilters who travel on a whim. This future study would need to take into account the increased usage of social media and technology within the quilting social world, as well as the demographics of modern quilters and serious quilters.

Another potential study could look at independent variables that lead to the travel motivations of serious quilters. Items to look at could be personality, attitudes, behaviors, the quilting groups they are a part of, and even the different trips they have taken. Figuring out how these motivations come about could be beneficial to understanding the

reasons why serious quilters travel. The reasons behind these motivations can be translated to study other serious leisure activities as well.

Another recommendation can be to look at what these motivations behind why serious quilters travel explain. The outcome variables of these motivations could explain phenomena such as how willing a quilter is to interact with another on trips based on personality and attitudes, and even the types of interactions that could happen on these trips. These motivations could also explain the types of trips certain quilters are more likely to take based on personality, attitudes, and behaviors. By ascertaining what these motivations explain about the serious quilter can be beneficial to quilt shops, festival owners, and quilting travel companies because they would be able to better hone in on the trips their clientele would like.

Another future study would be to continue this research on serious quilter motivations to ascertain if there is indeed a seventh characteristic of serious leisure participants. Travel is so integrated into their pursuit of their leisure activity that the desire to travel could be seen as another characteristic of serious participants. It is more than just traveling; it is traveling to further their seriousness within their leisure activity. Certain locations and festivals were seen as milestones of seriousness within the quilting social world, and goes beyond just simply participating in the social world. Other activities such as serious birding lead to the desire to travel for their leisure activity, and could also be used to ascertain this seventh characteristic.

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## APPENDIX

*TABLE 1 – Information about Participants*

Participant Name	Context
Brenda	70, divorced. Two kids. Grandmother quilted. Learned to quilt when pregnant with son. Primarily hand quilts and repairs/finishes antique quilts. Creates her own patterns. Loves to visit new quilt stores and be inspired. Caucasian. From Virginia.
Sherrie	66, married. Three kids, two of which sew, and many grandkids who also sew. Daughter inspired her to learn to quilt. Loves to make embroidery quilts. Loves new things, to be inspired. To learn new techniques and visit new places. Caucasian. Lives in South Texas.
Sarah	60, widowed. One adopted daughter. Learned to quilt on a whim. Loves road trips and shop hops. Travels with two

	<p>friends. Dresses up at the IQF for fun.</p> <p>Traveled to Africa once. Taught her adoptive daughter to quilt. Also loves to attend classes. Caucasian. From California. Lives in South Texas.</p>
Lynn	<p>49, married. Started quilting because she loved the way it looked. Two kids who quilt. Mother, sister, nieces and nephews also quilt. Travels with family members who quilt. Loves the family history and the creation of new family history through quilting and travel. Travels for the inspiration and the relaxation. Caucasian. Lives in South Texas.</p>
Natalie	<p>62, married. Grew up quilting. Two kids. Travels with her friends to the IQF, also dresses up. Went to Africa. Used to own a quilt shop. Needs to be inspired through her travels and find something new. Loves quilting road trips with her girlfriends. Caucasian. Lives in South Texas.</p>

Angie	<p>80, quilts with her quilting group. Has a daughter and several grandkids and nieces and nephews who love her quilting.</p> <p>Travels to the IQF. Loves her quilting group for the socialization, travels for that as well. Loves making quilts for people, family, friends. Travels for inspiration, new ideas, and new fabrics. Caucasian.</p> <p>Lives in Central Texas.</p>
Carrie	<p>48. Two kids. Married. Travels with her quilting friends Mary. Learned to quilt after seeing a quilt online with a free pattern. Travels for inspiration, loves shop hops. Does block swaps. Wants to travel more, see the 'must see' festivals. Uses Instagram and other social media sites to further her quilting. Caucasian. Lives in Central Texas.</p>
Dee	<p>73, quilts in a quilting groups. Got into quilting for the family history. Travels all over the world and visits quilting museums or museums that have quilts.</p>

	<p>Stops at quilting places wherever she travels to. Very into the history of quilting, and seeing how it changes from county to country. Caucasian. Lives in central Texas.</p>
Pam	<p>81. Learned to quilt at a young age.</p> <p>Makes quilts for her kids and grandkids.</p> <p>Travels for the inspiration. Goes to the IQF every year. Quilts in a quilting group.</p> <p>Considers quilting her second career.</p> <p>Loves retreats and festivals. Caucasian.</p> <p>Lives in central Texas.</p>
Mary	<p>49, divorced. Loves to travel with her quilting friend Carrie. Travels with her on road trips. Also learned to quilt because she found it online. Very into technology, especially when it comes to her quilting.</p> <p>Wants to travel to the must-see festivals as well. Mostly does shop hops with her friend. Very into the history of quilting because she is detail oriented. Noticed the changing face of quilting. Looks for</p>

	<p>inspiration when she travels. Caucasian.</p> <p>Lives in North Texas.</p>
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*Note.* The interviewees' names used in this study are pseudonyms.

Timeline:

March 31, 2016

- Final draft to committee

June 2016

- Submit application and proposal to IRB

September 2016 – January 2017

- Conduct qualitative interviews

March 2017

- Final Defense



## Interview Questions

1. What is your name?
2. What is your occupation?
3. Would you share with me how you got involved in quilting, and how many years you have been involved?
4. How would you describe your experience level as a quilter?
5. Could you describe a project you are proud to have completed? Why?
6. Would you describe your quilting space/room?
7. Will you describe your first traveling experience for quilting you did for me?  
What kind of trip was it?
8. Could you tell me of another time you traveled for quilting? Who did you go with? What did you do?
9. What festivals have you attended?
10. What festivals would you like to attend?
11. How many shop hops have you participated in? Which ones were they?
12. How many have been with groups? With friends?
13. What would you say are the reasons behind why you travel for quilting?
14. What type of travel would you like to do for quilting that you have not yet done?